

NEW RELEASE

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Governor Haley Proclaims April 12-19, 2015 as Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

In recognition of Public Safety Telecommunicators in South Carolina, Governor Nikki Haley has proclaimed April 12-19, 2015 as Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Governor Haley's proclamation coincides with the celebration of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week by 9-1-1 communication centers across the country, which recognizes the vital role of our professional Public Safety Telecommunicators in their efficient and safe management of emergency events.

Public Safety Telecommunicators are the "9-1-1 people" who answer emergency and non-emergency calls for law, fire and medical agencies. These Telecommunicators are also the same people who dispatch police, fire and emergency medical services to the public's request for assistance.

South Carolina Telecommunicators answer over four million calls for service each year. People call 9-1-1 for a wide array of legitimate reasons. It is not uncommon for a Public Safety Telecommunicator to get off the phone with someone reporting a barking dog only to provide CPR instructions to the next caller to help save a life.

Requests from the public for assistance may be received by our Public Safety Telecommunicators on a 9-1-1 or a seven-digit phone line through wireline or wireless technology. Several agencies in South Carolina are now implementing text messaging to 9-1-1 as another means of communications to follow technological innovations in the marketplace. The South Carolina 9-1-1 community strives to provide the highest quality emergency E911 service to all citizens and visitors of the state of South Carolina.

Information Regarding National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

Each year, the second full week of April is dedicated to the men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators. It was first conceived by Patricia Anderson of the Contra Costa County (Calif.) Sheriff's Office in 1981 and was observed only at that agency for three years. Members of the Virginia and North Carolina chapters of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) became involved in the mid-1980s. By the early 1990s, the national APCO organization convinced Congress of the need for a formal proclamation. Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) introduced what became H.J. Res. 284 to create "National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week." According to Congressional procedure, it was introduced twice more in 1993 and 1994, and then became permanent, without the need for yearly introduction.

The official name of the week when originally introduced in Congress in 1991 was "National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week." In the intervening years, it has become known by several other names, including "National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week" and "International Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week." The Congressional resolution also stated there were more than "500,000 telecommunications specialists," although other estimates put the number of dispatchers at just over 200,000. The Congressional figure may include support personnel and perhaps even those in the commercial sector of public safety communications.