**INTRODUCTION**

This Study Guide is designed to provide you information about the position of Dispatch Specialist Trainee. The information in this Guide will give you a better understanding of the duties a Dispatch Specialist Trainee performs and the types of information you will be required to learn if you are hired as a Dispatch Specialist Trainee. It is important that you read and study this Guide, as you may be applying information learned from it during your Critical and Oral Board exams. If you are interested in scheduling a sit-along please call 702-828-3880.

**MANDATORY SEMINAR/VIDEO**

A MANDATORY seminar or video is provided as part of each of our selection processes. This seminar or video provides important information about the position of Dispatch Specialist Trainee. At seminars, representatives from both the Communications Bureau and the Office of Human Resources will provide information, as well as answer questions.

**COMMUNICATIONS GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Communications Bureau and Call-Taker/Dispatch Responsibilities

Dispatch Specialist Trainees are assigned to the Communications Bureau. The Communications Bureau is responsible for Department 24-hour, two-way radio operations, ensuring they are conducted in compliance with the Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations. The Bureau is responsible for the receipt and screening of citizen requests for police service, the dispatching of police units as required, and/or the referral of citizens to an appropriate service or agency. It provides a centralized location for incoming emergency telephone communications.

Dispatch Specialist Trainee, Level I, and Level II positions report to a Communications Supervisor. When hired and once trained, you will learn both call-taking and dispatching (radio) functions. Once fully released to work independently, you may be assigned to work either function during your shift. When assigned to the call-taking function, you are responsible for screening both emergency 9-1-1 and non-emergency incoming telephone calls from citizens or other Department personnel. During these calls, you will be responsible for obtaining correct information, determining necessary action, and quickly and accurately processing calls that involve life or death situations according to Department and Bureau policy. When assigned to the radio function, you will be responsible for relaying information between 9-1-1 callers and police officers and dispatching officers and tracking officer activity in order to secure the safety of the officer and the facts of the situation. You will also be responsible for fulfilling other duties and assignments as directed by a Communications Supervisor. All dispatch functions require the ability to multi-task, quickly make good decisions, and be attentive and professional to callers.
It is important to understand that, if hired, you can and will be assigned to work anytime throughout the 24-hour, 7-day week, including holidays. You will be asked to work overtime, and occasionally mandated to work overtime, to ensure coverage of the radio channels and phones. Overtime is compensated at time and a half. You will work a minimum of a 10 hour shift schedule, depending on staffing levels and operational need (except during your initial Academy when you will work only a 10 hour day). You will be expected throughout training to maintain at least a typing speed of 45 W.P.M and be proficient in utilizing the top row number keys. Use of the 10 key functions is discouraged. You will also be required to purchase supplies to use while in the Academy. A list of specific items will be provided to you once you are hired.

**Training for a Dispatch Career**

When hired as a Dispatch Specialist Trainee, you will go through an intense, in-house Academy which lasts approximately TEN weeks. As stated above, during this time, you will work FOUR 10-hour days, and you may work Day or Swing shift. The Academy consists of classroom instruction, as well as working on a call simulator. Some of the general areas taught are:

- Working the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) & Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) Phone Systems.
- Determining criteria for officer response on calls.
- Techniques for handling extreme emergencies.
- Identifying hazards for officers responding on calls.
- Proper methods and resources to refer citizens when appropriate.

(See pages 6 & 7 for more specific topics taught in this initial Academy.)

The Dispatch Specialist position is a progressive series from DST (trainee) to Dispatch Specialist II. Probation is 18 months which includes the Academy. Upon completion of the Academy, you will spend approximately 16 weeks with a Communications Training Officer (CTO) to become proficient at taking both emergency and non-emergency calls. Upon successful completion of all areas of call taking, you will be released to work independently answering calls. After one year, you will progress to a Dispatch Specialist I and begin a two week Dispatch Academy. Some of the general areas taught in this Academy are:

- Speaking on the two-way radio communications system.
- Applying policy and procedures for dispatching police officers.
- Using proper terminology on the radio.
- Maintaining an officer's status.
- Updating calls (Events) to accurately reflect what is happening.
- Working emergency incidents, such as vehicle pursuits, officer involved shootings, explosive devices, etc.

(See pages 6 & 7 for more specific topics taught in this Academy.)

After completing the Dispatch Academy, you will spend approximately the next 28-30 weeks training one-on-one with a CTO. Once you are proficient at dispatching officers and have passed all phases of dispatch training, you will be released to work independently
progressing to a Dispatch Specialist II.

Career Opportunities

Once you have been Dispatch Specialist II (for two years and if performance is good), you have several career options within the Communications Bureau:

- You are eligible to train new employees and will receive an 8% pay increase while assigned to train.
- At four years you are eligible to compete for the position of Communications Supervisor. This position supervises a squad of 7 to 15 employees, handles the daily operations of the dispatch floor, and is responsible for ensuring that Command Staff is notified of any emergency situations, along with many other responsibilities.
- As a Communications Supervisor, you are eligible for the appointed position of Shift Manager. This position supervises the Communications Supervisors and reports to the Bureau Director.

COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SYSTEMS & TERMINOLOGY

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD), Geographic Information System (GIS) & Advanced Tactical Mapping System (ATM)
Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) has the ability to track available resources, information & hazards, and dispatch emergency personnel. CAD is integrated with GIS computer software which enables one to visualize geographic aspects of a body of data. GIS has the ability to translate implicit geographic data (such as a street address) onto the ATM. It can also geographically display coordinates onto the ATM (i.e., latitude/longitude from a wireless 9-1-1 call).

Enhanced 9-1-1 Phone System (E9-1-1)
This telephone system includes network switching, database, and premise elements capable of providing automatic location identification data (caller’s address and telephone number), and latitude and longitude for those calling from wireless phones. Call processing is increasingly more complex, especially for high-tech, high-volume, mission-critical law enforcement operations. This system is a sophisticated call routing system which has Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) to distribute calls evenly among call takers. It also has enhanced administrative capabilities. This system allows call takers to easily control a variety of critical applications from a single desktop. It is a Next Generation 9-1-1 system that is capable of allowing digital information (e.g., voice, photos, videos, text messages) to flow seamlessly from the public, through the 911 network, and on to emergency responders.

Event Numbers
Event numbers are created to catalog crimes that are reported to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Event numbers are electronically created in the CAD
system. This number consists of 10 digits: the first six digits indicate the date and the last four digits are chronologically assigned by the computer beginning with 0001 at the beginning of each day at midnight. An example of an event created on January 2, 2011 would be 1101021400. [11 (from 2011); 01 (from January); 02 (from the second day); 1400 (chronologically assigned - 1400th event of the day)].
TOPICS TAUGHT IN INITIAL DISPATCH ACADEMY

This Academy includes instruction in the following areas:

# **Civil/Criminal Law** - Provides study of the laws of the State of Nevada, Clark County, and City of Las Vegas as they apply to law enforcement.

# **IDF (Incident/Disposition/Function) Codes** - Teaches codes used strictly by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to describe or define a particular crime or incident. Use of these codes replaces the English language and affords the LVMPD a degree of privacy.

# **Sector Beats/Geography** - Outlines the geographical layout of Clark County including street block numbers and city and county boundaries.

# **Resident Officers** - Identifies the purpose of the Resident Officer Program, as well as their locations, major highways, call signs, and channel assignments.

# **Concurrent Jurisdiction** - Identifies the different agencies operating concurrently within and surrounding the LVMPD jurisdiction, and includes the actual geographic boundaries for each specific agency.

# **Call Screening** - Provides basic knowledge necessary to determine the appropriate course of action, according to LVMPD guidelines, using telephone policies and procedures, and techniques to solicit information from the caller in an efficient, professional manner.

# **Bureau Functions** - Explains the LVMPD organizational chart and the functions and responsibilities of each bureau, section, and detail.

# **Differential Response** - Explains procedures and criteria used to determine if a report or incident can be handled by a means other than an officer responding.

# **Event Preparation** - Directs the Trainee in the preparation of a call for police response using the CAD system, assisted by the use of abbreviations, police terminology, and phraseology.

# **Call Signs** - Identifies the various units within the LVMPD.
SCOPE/NCIC - Outlines procedures, formats, and information available through the various computer systems (i.e., SCOPE, NCIC, WVS, NLETS, LRMS, DMV, and CJIS) which are accessible to law enforcement agencies.

Simulator - Includes CAD commands, advanced telephone systems, and the taking of simulated calls for service from the public. The instructor provides each Trainee with assistance and guidance.

Liability Issues in 9-1-1 - Outlines the various areas of liability involved in the processing of 9-1-1 calls.

P# - When an employee is hired by the LVMPD, they are issued a P# which is a unique personnel number for that employee. In addition to names, employees are frequently asked to identify themselves by their P#.

TOPICS TAUGHT IN DISPATCH RADIO ACADEMY

This Academy includes instruction in the following areas:

Policy/Procedure & Notifications - Exposes students to Department and Bureau policies and procedures specifically tied into dispatching officers. Also explains when and who is notified based on particular situations or events.

RCP (Response Category Profile) & Prioritizing Calls - Guidelines for how many and which officers to send on particular situations or events is explained and practiced. Prioritizing teaches students to organize which calls hold priority for officer response.

Wants Channel - Instructions are given on how to run people, vehicles, guns and other property for wants or stolen status.

Geographical Dispatching - Teaches guidelines for dispatching units based on current officer locations in relation to the location of pending calls.

Critical Incident Dispatching - Exposes students to proper techniques for dispatching officers on critical incidents. Instructions are given on how to assist in setting up command posts, making proper notifications and following up after the incident has ended.

K9 & SWAT Usage - Explains criteria of when to utilize K9 and/or SWAT officers and how requests for these units are made.

Detective & Resident Officers - Explains criteria for utilizing Detectives based on particular types of crime. Provides instructions on Resident Officer response to areas such as Laughlin, Mt. Charleston or Primm.
Radio Simulation - Provides instruction on CAD commands & radio systems; puts to use information gained in all other classes to safely & effectively dispatch police officers to calls for service, making appropriate notifications, and ensuring public safety.

CALLS WAITING

The 9-1-1 telephone system has 4 queue lines which show the number of calls holding:

1. Emergency calls
2. Other Public Safety Agencies
3. LVMPD Officers
4. Non-emergency calls

EXAMPLE OF CALL FOR ASSISTANCE

The following describes how a telephone request for assistance is processed by the Communications Bureau, and how the calls for service are differentiated in terms of their priority nature.

1. A call for assistance is received by the Communications Bureau. Some type of crime has occurred.
2. The Dispatch Specialist working the phones answers the call.
3. The Dispatch Specialist working the phones uses the following guide to determine the priority level of the call. The priority level of the call determines the actions this Dispatch Specialist needs to take.

PRIORITY ZERO (0)
A call is categorized as a Priority Zero (0) when an immediate urgent response is requested by the nearest police unit regardless of current assignment.

EXAMPLES:
- Robbery in progress
- Hostage situation
- Officer needs help
- Subject shot or stabbed
**PRIORITY ONE (1)**
A call is categorized as **Priority One (1)** when the response of a police unit would probably prevent a more serious situation from developing, or there has been violence of a serious nature, or where threat of violence exists.

- **EXAMPLES:**
  - Family disturbance
  - Tenant/landlord disturbance
  - Suspicious Vehicle
  - Traffic accident

**PRIORITY TWO (2)**
A call is categorized as a **Priority Two (2)** when urgent or immediate response is not required.

- **EXAMPLES:**
  - Burglary with suspect no longer at scene
  - Stolen vehicle that occurred during the night

**EXAMPLES OF EVENT TYPES**
The following represent the types of events reported to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department for police assistance. Below each event is a list of information that you would be responsible for obtaining if you were working the phones and took this type of call.

**TRAFFIC ACCIDENT**

1. What is the location?
   - § If another jurisdiction, transfer the call.
   - § Determine if on private property.
2. Are there any injuries?
   - § If injuries, advise Fire Department so they can dispatch medical to the scene.
3. Are all the vehicles and parties involved still at the scene?
4. What is the caller's address?
5. What is the caller's name?
6. Is the caller involved or a witness?
7. What is the caller’s telephone number?
FAMILY DISTURBANCE

1. What is the location?
2. Who are the parties involved (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.)
3. Are there any weapons involved? If so, what and where are they?
4. Are there any injuries (to determine if medical needs to be dispatched)?
   $ If so, advise Fire Department
5. Has anyone involved been drinking or using drugs?
6. What is the name & description of the aggressor?
   $ Race
   $ Sex
   $ Age
   $ Color/Style of hair
   $ Facial hair
   $ Clothing description
7. What is the caller’s address?
8. What is the caller’s name & is he/she involved?
9. What is the caller’s telephone number?

OFFICER NEEDS HELP

1. What is the location?
2. Is medical assistance needed?
   $ Advise Fire Department
3. Is the officer wearing a uniform or in plainclothes?
4. Is there any suspect vehicle information?
   $ Direction of Travel (DOT)
   $ Year
   $ Make/Model
   $ Color
   $ Body Style
   $ License Plate Number
   $ Accessories, distinctive markings or characteristics (damage, loud exhaust, primer spots, tinted windows, etc.)
5. Is there any suspect information?
   $ If on foot, get Direction of Travel (DOT)
   $ Race
   $ Sex
   $ Age
   $ Weight
   $ Color/Style of hair
   $ Facial hair
   $ Clothing description
   $ Distinctive physical characteristics (missing teeth, tattoos, etc.)
SYSTEM SECURITY & DISSEMINATION

The following passage is an excerpt from the LVMPD policy on dissemination of information:

Data stored in each of the LVMPD criminal justice systems must be protected to ensure correct, legal, and efficient dissemination and use. Any unauthorized request, receipt, or dissemination of this material could result in civil and/or criminal proceedings against the individuals and/or agency and the imposition of sanctions against the agency. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes, personal information (i.e. information which reveals the identity of a person, including photograph, social security number, driver’s license number, ID card number, name, address, telephone number, or information regarding a medical condition or disability) is considered confidential information.

Limitations of Dissemination

Agencies are authorized to disseminate, under the guidelines of Department policy, criminal history information which originated with the releasing agency only. Dissemination of criminal history information that does not belong to the releasing agency is prohibited (unless specifically authorized by statute or contract with a state repository or originating agency). As such, members of this Department are authorized to disseminate criminal history information which originated with the LVMPD only. Dissemination of criminal history information that does not belong to the LVMPD or is obtained through other law enforcement computer systems is prohibited.

Criminal History Information is not to be requested, used or released:

- Outside of official duties;
- For personal use, interest, or gain;
- Where such dissemination would violate either local, state, or federal statutes or interlocal agreements or interstate contracts.

Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes, penalties may be assessed to any agency or person who willfully requests, obtains, or seeks to obtain records of criminal justice information under false pretenses; willfully communicates or seeks to communicate records of criminal justice to any agency or person; or willfully falsifies any records of criminal justice or any record relating to records of criminal justice information.
**CRITICALL PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING**

The computerized pre-employment test used by this agency measures underlying knowledge and abilities you need to possess prior to any training you might receive if you are hired as a Dispatch Specialist Trainee, including the ability to effectively navigate and use a computer. Because of this, you do not need to possess any specialized dispatcher or call-taker knowledge or training to be able to read, understand, or answer the test items.

The Criticall test uses a computer and headset to simulate a communications environment in measuring this knowledge and these abilities. Your job announcement provides a complete listing of the areas being measured and details about the various modules of this test. To assist you in preparing for this test, this Guide provides the following general instructions:

**General Instructions**

- Follow all of the instructions provided during the test.

- Practice test questions are offered before each module of the test to help you determine if you are following the instructions correctly. Scores from the practice questions are not included in your final test score. You are not required to take the practice questions and will be given an opportunity to bypass them during the test if you wish. We do highly encourage you to use the practice questions.

- During the test, you will listen to spoken information heard over a headset and then must use that information to answer questions or input data.

- Many test takers find it helpful to have the computer’s “Num Lock” (number lock) function turned “on” when taking the test.

- The computer will allow you to enter information during the test using only UPPER case letters.

- You will be penalized if you skip any questions during the test (unless you are informed otherwise during the instructions for that portion of the test).

- For some questions on the test you will need to select the correct response by clicking your mouse on a box to the left of your choice, or by pressing the **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D** key on the keyboard.
Sometimes, you will need to use “scroll bars” on the right side of the computer screen so that you can view those parts of a document that might be hidden.
Decision rules to be followed during testing

One of the important abilities needed by a public safety communication’s employee is the ability to make decisions based upon structured rules. During the test, you will be asked to quickly and accurately indicate which type of agency (i.e., Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Service, or Public Utility Company) should be dispatched to the scene of an incident according to the rules listed below.

You should read and learn these rules before taking the test. Experience has shown that the better an applicant knows these rules, the better they will perform during the decision-making portions of the test.

**IMPORTANT!**
For purposes of this test you should use only the decision rules shown below when responding to “emergency message” items during the test. Do not rely on any prior knowledge about either this agency or any other public-safety agency when responding to those items.

- **Police**
  Police Department should be dispatched when someone is attempting or threatening to physically harm another person, or has actually physically harmed another person, or when a person causes or is in the process of causing harm to another person’s property.

- **Fire**
  Fire Department should be dispatched when there are the immediate signs of a fire in progress (such as flames or smoke), when a fire alarm is sounded, or when a person who is trapped or confined needs to be rescued or released.

- **EMS**
  Emergency Medical Service should be dispatched when there is an emergency medical condition requiring intervention by medically trained personnel.

- **Utility**
  Public Utility should be dispatched when there is a problem associated with malfunctioning or broken public water systems, electric power systems (including, but not limited to, electrical power lines, streetlights, and traffic signals), natural gas systems used for home heating, or blocked sewer drainpipes.

Examples:

Based upon the decision rules shown above, if you were given the scenarios of:

- “Man is throwing rocks in an attempt to hurt children,” you should select POLICE as the correct response since the man was attempting to physically harm another person.
- “Electrical power lines knocked down during a severe hail storm,” you should select UTILITY as the correct response because there is a problem with broken or malfunctioning electrical power lines.

Please note that sometimes you will be asked to respond to emergency-message test items while performing other tasks on the computer. For this reason you will need to be reasonably proficient at navigating and using a computer in order to perform both tasks at the same time.
To make your selection as to which of the four types of agencies should be dispatched in response to the “emergency response” messages that will appear on the screen during the test you should:

- Move the cursor over one of the four symbols (indicating Police, Fire, EMS, or Utility Company) (an example of the four symbols as they appear during the test is shown to the right) and left-click the mouse once to make your choice. (The example to the right has the cursor placed over the “Fire” symbol).

Note: Throughout the test you should use only single clicks of the left mouse button.

- You will have only 15 seconds to respond to each of the “emergency messages” that appear on the screen during the test. Credit will not be given if an incorrect agency is dispatched or if your response is not made within the 15 seconds after the emergency message first appears.