



**Athens-Clarke County (GA) Police Dept  
Central Communications Division  
Assessment Report**



**2016**

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY (GA) POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION**

**Assessment Report  
March 20 -22, 2016  
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**A. Agency name, CEO and AM:**

Athens-Clarke County (GA) Police Department  
Central Communications Division  
3035 Lexington Road  
Athens, Georgia 30605-2444

R. Scott Freeman, Ph.D., Chief of Police  
Captain Keith T. Kelley, Communications Administrator/Division Commander  
Ms. Sara B. Ivy, Accreditation Coordinator

**B. Dates of the On-site Assessment:**

March 20-22, 2016

**C. Assessment Team:**

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**D. CALEA Program Manager and Type of On-site:**

Vincent Dauro, Regional Program Manager

Second Reaccreditation, B size (authorized strength 32 full-time personnel), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition  
Public Safety Communications Accreditation Standards

PowerDMS – Manual Version 2.19

This report reflects a Gold Standard Assessment (GSA) designed to focus on outcomes. A conference call between the chief of police, Central Communications Division commander, accreditation manager, and the Assessment Team Leader took place on February 18, 2016. The conference call focused on the agency's SWOT analysis, specific areas needing review, and files selected for off-site review. A total of 57 files were reviewed off-site by the Assessment Team Leader. On-site assessment activities focused on interviews and observations of agency activities, practices, processes, and outcomes.

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department has been CALEA accredited since July 12, 1987, and was reaccredited for the eighth time on July 12, 2015. The multiple

enrollment crosswalk process was utilized for this assessment, with 43 standards certified as in compliance for the purpose of this public safety communications assessment.

### **E. Community and Agency Profile:**

#### 1. Community profile

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department Central Communications Division is located in the city of Athens, Georgia. Situated in northeast Georgia, approximately 65 miles northeast of the city of Atlanta, Athens-Clarke County has a population of 120,938 (2014 US Census estimate) and an area of approximately 122 square miles, making it the smallest of 159 counties in the state. Athens-Clarke County also has more than 425 streams and rivers, including the Oconee River.

Named after Revolutionary War hero Elijah Clarke, and originally a part of Jackson County, Clarke County was created as an act of the Georgia General Assembly on December 5, 1801. In 1801, a delegation travelled to the area to select a site for the University of Georgia, purchasing 633 acres of land, and naming it "Athens," in honor of the Greek city that was the center of culture and learning during ancient times. The population of the area grew alongside the University of Georgia at Athens in the early 1800's, and the area's agricultural and cotton industries prospered as textiles and manufacturing became significant industries in the area. The town of Athens was officially incorporated in 1806 and chartered as a city in 1872.

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Unified Government was formed in 1990 after citizens in both the city of Athens and the county of Clarke voted to combine the two governments. Unification of the two governments occurred on January 14, 1991. The ACC Unified Government is headed by an elected mayor and ten elected commissioners, each representing one of ten districts. Day-to-day operations of the ACC Unified Government are overseen by a manager, appointed by the mayor and Commission. Other incorporated areas within ACC are the cities of Winterville and Bogart (partial).

ACC has been classified as an "entrepreneur-friendly" and "certified work-ready" community by the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and was named by Forbes Magazine as one of the "25 Best Places to Retire" in 2015. The largest employers in the area include the University of Georgia, Athens Regional Health System, Clarke County School District, Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, ACC Unified Government, and Saint Mary's Healthcare System.

#### 2. Agency profile

The Central Communications Division is an organizational component of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, and is located in the department's headquarters at 3035 Lexington Road in Athens, Georgia. The police department has a rich history, dating back to 1847, when the first assistant warden was hired to keep order in the

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village. Over time, the village (and then city) and county police departments grew until 1991, when the two departments consolidated into the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, as part of the new unified government, and moved into the new Lexington Road facility.

In July 1991, the first shift of dispatchers from the city of Athens and Clarke County police departments began working side by side in the new unified dispatch center. Central Communications, as it became known, was a component of the uniform division of the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department until 2005, when Keith Kelley was appointed as the first civilian communications administrator. Mr. Kelley was subsequently appointed as a sworn police captain in 2015. In 2006, Central Communications Division became the fifth CALEA accredited public safety communications center in the state.

Today, the ACC Central Communications Division provides call taking and dispatch services for the ACC Police Department, ACC Fire and Emergency Services, Clarke County Sheriff's Office, Winterville Police Department, and the Winterville Fire Department. The facility is equipped with the latest technologies, and 32 full-time communications personnel man ten dispatch/call taker workstations, working 12-hour, rotating shifts.

### 3. Demographics

The demographic composition of the service area and agency are represented in the following table:

	Service Population		Available Workforce		Current Employees		Current Female Employees		Prior Assessment Employees		Prior Assessment Female Employees	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Caucasian</b>	67,725	56	35,190	61	22	71	16	52	21	68	16	52
<b>African-American</b>	33,863	28	14,452	25	8	26	6	19	8	26	7	23
<b>Hispanic</b>	13,303	11	5,192	9	1	3	0	0	2	6	0	0
<b>Other</b>	6,047	5	2,884	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	120,938	100	57,718	100	31	100	22	71	31	100	23	74

Of the 31 current Athens-Clarke County (GA) Police Department Central Communications Division employees, 70.9 percent are Caucasian, 25.8 percent are African-American, and 3.2 percent are Hispanic, as compared to the available workforce (i.e., Clarke County, GA), which is 60.9 percent Caucasian, 25.1 percent African-American, 9.1 percent Hispanic, and 4.9 percent other ethnicities (e.g., American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, other race, or mixture of two or more other races). The agency's workforce is 70.9 percent female and 29.1 percent male.

A comparison of the ethnic composition of the actual strength of the agency to the available workforce of Clarke County, Georgia, finds that African-American employees are represented equally, while Caucasian employees are overrepresented and Hispanic and other ethnicities are somewhat underrepresented. Since females comprise the majority of the agency's workforce, males are also underrepresented.

A recruitment plan exists that contains a statement of goals and objectives, key action steps with recommended measures, and procedures to be used in evaluating efforts toward accomplishing these stated goals.

#### 4. Future issues

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division cited several future challenges faced by the agency: staffing needed to keep pace with increasing call volumes and workloads; costs associated with maintaining and replacing technology; and the pay scale for communications personnel.

The Central Communications Division has not seen an increase in staffing since it was created in 1991, despite the loss of two positions (one was reallocated, the other assigned to administrative duties), gradual increases in call volume, and the addition of new duties and responsibilities. The agency reports that since April 2014, it has not been able to meet emergency line performance measures (i.e., 90 percent emergency calls answered in ten seconds or less.) To add to the staffing issue, the agency was recently informed by the fire department that it intends to supplement the commercial ambulance service by responding to emergency medical calls, adding to the workload of communications officers. This comes at a time when Central Communications Division personnel feel that their pay scale is not appropriately comparable with other positions within the police department.

The agency has recently upgraded a number of critical technological systems to include: computer aided dispatch (CAD) system; E911 telephony; and the trunked land mobile radio system (TLMR). The considerable cost of these upgrades was funded through a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). SPLOST involved the voter-approved imposition of a one percent county sales tax to fund capital outlay. Given the shorter life cycles of computer-based hardware and software, the agency will need to plan for the future replacement or refresh of these technologies.

#### 5. CEO biography

R. Scott Freeman, Ph.D., chief of police of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, serves as the chief executive officer of the department, which includes the Central Communications Division. Chief Freeman began his public safety career early when he joined the Conyers (GA) Police Explorers while a high school student in the ninth grade. While in high school, he went to work as a part-time 911 dispatcher with the Rockdale County (GA) Sheriff's Department. After graduating from high school, he joined the Conyers Police Department as a dispatcher, and over a 22-year career with the department, worked his way to the rank of major.

Credited for helping the department advance in technology, implementing the CompStat paradigm, and for playing a role in helping the department achieve initial CALEA accreditation in 2012, he left the department to become Chief Deputy of the Rockdale County (GA) Sheriff's Office. While there, Chief Deputy Freeman managed the daily operations of the Jail Bureau, Criminal Investigations Bureau, Field Services Bureau, Judicial Services Bureau, Support Services Bureau, and the Office of Professional Standards. On July 6, 2015, Chief Freeman was appointed as the chief of police of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department.

Chief R. Scott Freeman is a strong advocate of well-trained and highly educated personnel. He has a doctorate degree in Public Policy and Administration with a specialization in Public Safety Management and Leadership, Masters of Public Administration degree, Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership, Associate of Science degree in Criminal Justice, and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy (248th session). Chief Freeman is an active member of numerous professional organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, and Police Association for College Education, American Society of Criminology, and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.

#### **F. Public Information Activities:**

Public notice and input is a cornerstone of democracy and CALEA accreditation. This section reports on the community's opportunity to comment on its law enforcement agency and to bring matters to the attention of the Commission that otherwise may be overlooked.

##### **a. Telephone Contacts**

The open telephone line, public comment session was held on Monday, March 21, 2016, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Three calls were received from members of the public, only one of which related directly to the service provided by the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division. Ms. Heidi Davison of Athens said that she dialed 911 on several occasions and always found the dispatchers to be extremely helpful and responsive.

One call was in regard to the wireless surcharge that phone owners pay, and the fact that the current location technology presented to dispatch centers should be capable of better locating callers. This is a national issue that all public safety communications professionals agree with, but is beyond the scope of this assessment. Another caller complained about how she was treated by ACC police officers that she came into contact with on several occasions. This was not related to services provided by the Central Communications Division, and call information was provided to the police department administration for follow-up.

b. Correspondence

A letter was received from Johnny C. Fowler, retired Athens City Clerk-Treasury and Budget officer, commending the police department writing that its members are well trained and respected by the community. Mr. Fowler wrote that in his judgment the department has met and exceeded the professional standards to achieve accreditation.

c. Media Interest

According to the agency, there was no media publicity prior to the on-site, and no media interest was evident during the on-site.

d. Public Information Material

The agency reports that a public information notice was provided to the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Public Information Office for inclusion in the government cable access channel (ACCTV Channel 7). Copies were also made available in the lobby of police headquarters and posted in both English and Spanish at City Hall, ACC Police Department (headquarters and substations), Court House, Water Business Office, ACC Public Library, and various community centers. More than 100 mail-outs were sent to community leaders and citizens, and agency employees received copies of the on-site agenda.

A news release was placed on the agency's website and was sent out on its news media email list to community members, television stations (e.g., WSB-TV), radio broadcast stations (e.g., WGAU, WNGC, WRFC, WGMG), and the print media (e.g., *Athens Banner Herald*, *The Red and Black*), as well as distributed to agency personnel for review.

e. Community Outreach Contacts

The assessment team leader was able to observe and/or interview 18 of the 31 (58 percent) current Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division employees. All were found to be knowledgeable and competent in their work, and exhibited teamwork in their efforts. Employee morale and "esprit de corps" appeared to be high.

The assessment team had an opportunity to speak with several public safety agencies that receive service from the Central Communications Division. Captain Melanie Rutledge, ACC Police Department Uniform Division commander, described a close and cooperative working relationship between patrol and the Central Communications Division and stated that the communications administrator sits in on monthly police department staff meetings. Police department new hires sit in with dispatchers during their training, as well as some officers assigned to light duty.

ACC Fire Chief Jeff Scarbrough said that the Central Communications Division is responsive to, and supportive of, the fire department. He cited that the Central Communications Division scored high in helping the fire department achieve a Class 2 ISO (Insurance Services Organization) rating. Class 2 is the second highest rating, and about one-third of the rating is based on the communications function. Chief Scarbrough said that his department is working closely with the agency in regard to an increased need to respond to emergency medical service (EMS) calls along with the commercial ambulance service provider.

Winterville Police Chief John Finley said that the agency does a “fantastic” job and that his department never had any issues with the services provided. He added that when he needs anything from the agency, he always receives a response. Winterville Fire Chief Frankie Gabriel described the agency as “second to none.” He also said that he has been chief for 24 years, and “dispatch gets better and better every day.” Chief Gabriel stated that several dispatchers go above and beyond in their assistance (e.g., providing hydrant locations on a structure fire response).

Chief Deputy Jimps Cole, of the Clarke County Sheriff’s Office, described the agency as professional, and added that the relationship between the Central Communications Division and his agency has improved over the years. Chief Cole said that any issues he brings to the agency’s attention are promptly looked into and resolved.

The assessor also spoke with Blaine H. Williams, acting manager of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government. Mr. Williams spoke highly of both the agency and Police Chief Freeman. He advised that the county just completed a national survey that found agency services to be in line with national averages. Acting Manager Williams was aware of the challenges faced by the agency, with the need to maintain and refresh technology.

Robby Atkins, director of operations for National EMS, the local commercial ambulance service, said that he has worked with the ACC Central Communications Division since 2009. He states that his 24/7 dispatch center receives approximately 14,000 EMS call forwards from the agency each year. Mr. Atkins related that he and his personnel enjoy a “great working relationship” with the agency.

## **G. Essential Services:**

### **Organization, Direction, and Supervision (Chapters 1-2)**

The mission statement of the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division states that the agency, *“...is committed to excellence in public safety by providing the vital link between the citizens and visitors of Athens-Clarke County’s*

*diverse community and its emergency service resources. In carrying out this mission, we recognize that service is our one and only product. We share a common, ongoing goal to provide that service at the most superior level possible."*

The ACC Police Department maintains a Values and Principles Statement that is applicable to all employees, including Communications Division personnel. The statement describes the agency as a vibrant public safety organization, devoted to continuous development, excellence, and ethical standards, and managed according to the principles of community orientation and quality leadership, with a customer service focus. Employees of the Communications Division are also required to sign and abide by the IACP Law Enforcement Code of Ethics. The agency is working on a hybrid code of ethics specific to Central Communications Division personnel.

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division communications administrator reports to the deputy chief of police and is responsible for performing the supervisory and administrative work associated with the Division. Duties include staffing, training, compiling reports, ensuring quality service, resolving equipment issues, attending staff meetings, and representing the agency at various functions involving county government and community organizations.

Communications supervisors, also referred to as communications shift supervisors, are responsible for communications personnel assigned to their shift and the management of the ACC Central Communications Division, to ensure efficient and professional operation at all times. Communications supervisors make work assignments; receive complaints from citizens or public safety agencies; handle requests for information from the news media; ensure the proper operation of equipment, taking necessary action if malfunctions occur; and ensure the security of the communications center.

Communications officers are responsible for conducting the operations of the communications center, which include answering emergency and non-emergency calls (i.e., call taking) and dispatching in accordance with established guidelines. A senior communications officer is responsible for the training and deployment of newly hired communications trainees in addition to performing a communications officer's regular duties.

Goals and objectives for the Central Communications Division are developed annually by the communications administrator, are emailed to all personnel, and are posted on the bulletin board in the locker area. Communications goals for 2016 include: working to achieve APCO standards relating to call answering times; maintaining an employee attrition rate below 18 percent; developing and promoting qualified individuals into leadership roles; implementing a tactical dispatch team to support police department tactical operations and special events; providing monthly training updates to increase familiarity with changes in policies and procedures and serve as refresher training on topics which need reinforcement; providing semiannual training for communications training officers; and maintaining CALEA public safety communications accreditation.

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Central Communications Division goals are sent to the police department administration. High-level goals and objectives were included in the department's overall goals and objectives. All goals and objectives remained the focus of the Central Communications Division, and progress made towards attaining them is formally documented quarterly, exceeding the CALEA annual requirement. Chief Freeman has indicated that in the future, he plans to meet with all division commanders for the purpose of building goals for each division. This effort will include a SWOT analysis. Goals project status will be posted on the department's "F drive" and will become a living document; the status of goals for each division will be updated by division commanders approximately every two weeks.

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department maintains several written directives manuals that include policy (Manual A), operations (Manual B), administration (Manual C), and communications (Manual D). The policy manual pertains to aspects of the police department's law enforcement function that relate to every employee. Responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for law enforcement duties conducted by sworn and civilian employees, and in support of those duties, are contained in the operations manual. Aspects of the police department that support operations, including training, records maintenance, information distribution, and other functions conducted by both sworn and civilian employees, are contained in the administration manual. The communications manual establishes the procedures specific to the police department's Central Communications Division.

In the most recent CALEA Agency Status Report, the agency indicated a weakness in its written directives system that covers administrative and police operations and practices that impact the Central Communications Division. Chief Freeman said that the department was in the process of contracting out with the Daigle Law Group (DLG) to provide a whole new written directives system. DLG is a national law firm with expertise in the review, development, and revision of policies and procedures to reflect modern practices. Chief Freeman indicated that the process will begin after the CALEA public safety communications on-site assessment and estimates the process will take 16 to 24 months to complete.

Like many public safety communications centers in current times, budgetary challenges are a concern of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, including the Central Communications Division. Over the last five years, the police department has seen its budget reduced by approximately \$600,000 due to the economy. In addition, a recently proposed change in legislation would, if passed, have a significant effect on the agency by reducing 911 fees. The agency relies on these fees, which currently provide \$1.6M of the division's \$3.5M operating budget.

With an increased reliance on technology, budget uncertainty has the agency pondering how it will maintain and refresh the technology (hardware and software) in the years to come. With much of its technology refreshed within the last two years, the agency must focus seven to ten years out and plan how it will deal with equipment lifecycle issues.

Much of the new technology was purchased using the state's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). Those funds must be approved by a voter referendum and therefore cannot be considered as reliable funding sources. Long range planning for sustainment is critically important.

Chief Freeman has indicated that he will address future needs through a fresh approach to the department's multi-year plan. The agency plans to use the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) strategic planning model, and engage the services of the University of Georgia (UGA) as a facilitator to conduct department meetings and community forums and assist in identifying specific goals and projects and providing a finished product.

### **Personnel Allocation**

The authorized strength of the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division is 32 personnel. Four employees are allocated to the administrative staff: 911 communications commander; 911 training coordinator; terminal agency coordinator; and the background investigator.

Central Communications Division operations personnel are assigned to one of four teams: Team Alpha; Team Bravo; Team Charlie; and Team Delta. Teams work 12-hour shifts (generally 0700 to 1900 hours or 1900 to 0700 hours) and rotate between days and nights every 16 weeks. Each team is led by one communications supervisor and two senior communications officers. Minimum operations staffing is six personnel, optimally seven (includes communications officers, senior communications officers, and communications supervisors).

Workload assessments are conducted annually by the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division as part of its annual report. Annual assessments exceed the CALEA triennial requirement. In conducting the assessment, the agency considers workload (e.g., incoming call volume, audio recording requests, secondary tasks), performance measures (e.g., speed of answer), and employee staffing, attendance, and attrition. Staffing estimates are provided using APCO Project RETAINS.

The workload assessments done for 2013 found that the Central Communications Division was able to provide adequate customer service (e.g., 90.9 percent of emergency lines answered within ten seconds) at current staffing levels. However, assessments conducted for 2014 and 2015 found that the agency was not meeting emergency line performance standards (88.4 percent and 87 percent respectively). The agency did not request additional personnel in the 2015 FY budget due to economic conditions, but has found it necessary to request five new communications officer positions in the 2016 FY budget. This is due to the continued decline in call answering times, increased workloads associated with secondary tasks (e.g., public safety alert messaging, open records/audio requests), and the loss of operational personnel reassigned to administrative tasks.

Specialized assignments maintained by the ACC Central Communications Division include: communications training coordinator (responsible for coordinating the training of new personnel and for providing in-service training) and communications training officers (working directly with trainees). The agency does have a career ladder step of senior communications officer, with selection similar to the promotional process. One or two senior communications officers are assigned to each team.

### **Organizational Integrity**

Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division policy requires that all complaints made against communications personnel be documented, regardless of the complaint. Complaints from the public or public safety employees regarding equipment failures, policy and procedure, professionalism, call mishandling, insubordination, and minor policy or disciplinary infractions are deemed "informal complaints" and are primarily handled by communications shift supervisors or the communications administrator.

Formal complaints may be written or verbal, and are generally made to the communications administrator or the chief of police. The receipt of a formal complaint is acknowledged by letter, telephone, or e-mail, and the complainant is provided with periodic status reports.

In the event that an ACC Central Communications Division employee has performed in a manner that has created an increased likelihood of agency liability or is the subject of a complaint of misconduct, an investigation is conducted by the communications administrator or communications shift supervisor. If the alleged misconduct is determined to be of a criminal nature, involves harassment, or requires further investigation, the complaint may be assigned by the chief of police or deputy chief of police to the Athens-Clarke County Police Department's Professional Responsibility Unit (PRU) for investigation.

A written directive requires that employees who are the subject of an internal investigation be notified in writing of the allegations, as well as their rights and responsibilities relative to the inquiry. The police department's PRU endeavors to complete an internal investigation within 30 days, but written authorization from the chief of police is required should it extend beyond 60 days. Meanwhile, complainants are kept apprised of the status on a bi-weekly basis. At the conclusion of an investigation, the complaint is adjudicated as sustained, not sustained, unfounded, misconduct not based on complaint, or exonerated. The agency reports that no Central Communications Division employees were the subject of an internal investigation during this assessment period.

The number of negative personnel actions remained fairly constant throughout the assessment period. There were no disciplinary terminations reported, nor any resignations in lieu of termination. On a significant, positive note, a reported 521 commendations were issued to Central Communications Division employees over the

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course of this assessment period. The agency is proud of its employee recognition program and uses the Guardian Tracking system to track positive employee performance. The system audits supervisory observations and results in notifications of exemplary performance to the employee and his or her supervisor. Agency supervisors (from both the Central Communications Division and the police department) are to be commended for the excellent job they do in observing and noting occasions of outstanding performance exhibited by their communications officers.

Personnel Actions

	2013	2014	2015
Reprimand	0	0	1
Warning	2	2	0
Counseling	13	8	12
Suspension	1	0	0
Demotion	0	0	0
Resign In Lieu of Termination	0	0	0
Termination	0	0	0
Other (resignation, layoff, retirement)	0	0	0
Total	16	10	13
Commendations	269	112	140

**Liability**

If a Central Communications Division employee is alleged to have performed in a manner that has created an increased likelihood of agency liability, the matter must be investigated by the communications shift supervisor or the communications administrator. In the event the incident of liability is sustained, the appropriate level of discipline is recommended and commenced. A counseling statement issued to an employee is forwarded to the communications administrator for review. Should the allegation of liability be of a serious nature (e.g., death or injury to persons), the communications shift supervisor and the communications administrator will review the incident to determine necessary, immediate action (e.g., relieving the employee from duty). The communications administrator will investigate and report the findings to the assistant chief of Support Services and the chief of police.

Liability Reports

	2013	2014	2015
Number Reported	3	1	0
Training Deficiencies	0	0	0
Failure of Policy	0	0	0
Inattention to Detail	3	1	0
Other	0	0	0

The agency reported only four incidents of potential liability during this assessment period (three in 2013, one in 2014, and none in 2015); six liability incidents were reported during the previous assessment period. The agency attributes the low number of liability incidents to training, a low attrition rate that has allowed them to retain skilled

and experienced personnel, and situational monitoring and awareness by communications supervisors. During "sit-ins," the assessor observed that supervisors were keenly aware of activities.

Liability incident reviews were found to be thoughtful, not only resulting in counseling or discipline when deemed appropriate, but also in recommending changes in written directives when necessary. Annual analysis reports were completed for each year of the current cycle.

**Performance Measures**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department's Central Communications Division does not maintain a formal performance measurement program. The agency has, however, adopted the emergency line national standard (NENA and APCO) that requires 90 percent of 911 calls, arriving at the public safety answering point during the average busiest hour of the day, be answered within ten seconds. Monthly, quarterly, and annual analytical reports are produced to show average ring times for incoming 911 lines. According to the agency, it has been a struggle to meet its 911 performance measures during 2014 (88.4 percent) and 2015 (87 percent). This has been one of several key factors behind the agency seeking to add five new communications officers in their 2016 FY budget request.

With the installation of a new call taking solution (i.e., VESTA 4), the Communications Division acquired the Aurora Management Information System (MIS) solution that will allow for enhanced measurement of performance and deficiencies. This, in turn, will assist the agency in obtaining operational efficiencies, improving decision making, and supporting the budget request for additional communications officers.

Performance Measures

	2013	2014	2015
Incoming Emergency Calls	131,610	135,473	128,565
Incoming Non-Emergency Calls	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outgoing Calls	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	131,610	135,473	128,565
Calls Resulting in Dispatch	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average Abandonment Rate	7%	8%	5%
Average Processing Time (enter to dispatch)*	N/A	N/A	N/A

\* Not able to be tracked with previous call taking solution (see above narrative)

### Public Education

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department Central Communications Division participates in a limited number of public education programs, which includes the Youth Citizen's Police Academy and dispatch center tours. Participation in public education activities is not where the agency would like it to be. This is largely due to budget issues (e.g., limited overtime outside of maintaining dispatch operations) and staffing issues (i.e., increased call volume over time, with fewer communications officers assigned to dispatch operations due to administrative reassignments).

The agency has indicated a need and desire for increasing its public education activities; this matter has been discussed, and several options for accomplishing it will be considered.

Public Education Activities

	2013	2014	2015
Surveys Completed	0	0	0
Presentations Performed	10	3	4
Number of People Contacted (tours, etc.)	331	70	94
Press Releases Initiated by Agency	0	0	0

### Risk Management Program

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Unified Government maintains the Safety and Risk Division as a component of the ACC Human Resources Department. Staffed by a safety and risk administrator, a human resources generalist, and a senior human resources generalist, the Division oversees the county's in-house workers' compensation program and the general liability and safety (e.g., random drug testing, safety classes, CPR/first aid) program, as well as negotiates insurance premiums and contracts, and investigates accidents and claims.

### Human Resources, Recruitment, Selection, Promotion and Training (Chapters 3-5)

Chapter 1-9 of the Code of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) and Section 4-301 of the Athens-Clarke County Charter stipulate that the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government's Human Resources Department shall establish a system of personnel policies that will meet the needs of all employees, and that all directives shall be in accordance with the personnel system, as approved by the ACC Mayor and Commission.

Communications Division directives require that any employee who works a traumatic critical incident and exhibits signs of stress be relieved from duty as quickly as possible by the communications shift supervisor or communications administrator. The affected employee is referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and a follow-up is conducted to determine whether the employee can return to work or further action is

needed. If an employee is personally affected by a minor incident, that employee may be temporarily relieved from duties until he or she feels able to resume work. No employees were relieved from duty during this assessment period.

### **Classification Plan**

The job classification system used by the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department's Central Communications Division is a component of the ACC Unified Government's personnel system in regard to classes of employees, compensation, qualifications, job specifications, and provisions for reclassification. The agency coordinates closely with the ACC Human Resources Department, and the system is formally reviewed on an annual basis, in conjunction with the budget process.

The last comprehensive job task analysis was conducted in 2010, with the assistance of a workforce consultant. Agency employees were asked to complete the detailed Comprehensive Position Questionnaire (CPQ). When a vacancy occurs in the Division, the position's job description is reviewed to determine if any updates should be made based on changes in responsibilities or skills required of the job. If significant changes are noted, a new CPQ is completed, and adjustments to the job description are made. The next complete CPQ review is scheduled for 2018.

### **Compensation, Benefits and Conditions of Work**

It is the policy of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) and the police department to fairly and equitably compensate employees in compliance with the county's personnel system, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and all other local, state, and federal laws. The ACC personnel system has created a compensation plan pay scale that establishes minimum, midpoint, and maximum salaries based upon the employee's pay grade. The personnel system also establishes employee benefits and the types of leave available to agency employees. The agency's salary range for communications officers is comparable to other communications centers in the state.

### **Collective Bargaining Agreements**

Athens-Clarke County Police Department Central Communications Division employees do not participate in collective bargaining.

### **Performance Evaluations**

Performance evaluations are conducted in accordance with the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) personnel system and in accordance with applicable federal and state statutes. These evaluations are to be based solely on an employee's job performance during the defined rating period, March 16 to September 16 (interim) and March 16 to March 15 of the following year (final), using the ACC Performance Planning and Review form. Employees are afforded the opportunity to read and sign their evaluations and are given a written copy of it.

Probationary employees are evaluated quarterly.

### **Grievances**

No grievances were filed by Athens-Clarke County Police Department Central Communications Division employees during this assessment period. In many respects, the low number of grievances can be attributed to the relationship between management and the communications line personnel. A number of Central Communications Division employees spoke highly of the communications administrator, Captain Kelley, and Chief Freeman. An interview with both confirmed a genuine interest in their personnel and a desire to engage in open communications with them. Chief Freeman mentioned that he holds periodic "town hall" meetings, where staff can come to ask questions.

### **Disciplinary Processes**

Agency supervisors who become aware of an employee's alleged act or omission that may amount to misconduct, are required to take action in order to prevent aggravation of the incident. The communications administrator is notified, and an investigation is conducted to determine if the allegation amounts to misconduct. In the event the allegation is ultimately sustained, and formal discipline is deemed necessary and appropriate, discipline may be imposed, with the concurrence of the chief of police. This includes a written reprimand, suspension with or without pay, an extension of probation, demotion, dismissal, or any combination of these. In the case of minor infractions, a supervisor may issue an oral reprimand/counseling statement, which is considered non-disciplinary in nature, but may be used as the basis to support disciplinary action in the future.

### **Recruitment Activities**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department's chief of police is responsible for the administration of the recruiting program, which includes the recruitment of both sworn and civilian personnel. In its most recent SWOT analysis, the agency mentions challenges in finding good candidates, and as such, the communications workforce of ethnic and gender diversity that it seeks has not yet been realized.

Agency recruitment activities take place in conjunction and cooperation with the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government's Human Resources Department. The Central Communications Division does not maintain its own recruitment program, focused exclusively on recruiting communications officers.

While there were proofs of police department recruitment activity throughout the assessment period, there was limited proof of any activity specific to the recruitment of communications officers. The agency reported that its participation in the police department's recruiting activities is determined by the following factors: the attrition rate rises sharply within a three-month period or rises above 15 percent over a 12-month period; the applicant pool falls below ten persons per job posting over a six-month period; and the number of inquiries received for the communications officer job drops. The agency reports that favorable conditions account for its limited direct participation in the police department's recruiting efforts.

An interview with the ACC's senior HR generalist assigned to the police department delineated Human Resources' collaboration with the police department in its recruiting efforts. It was explained that the job fairs and other external recruiting opportunities in which the police department participates also include information on civilian career opportunities. Furthermore, communications job postings on the website are linked to other websites that pull in a diverse cross-section of the community (e.g., Athens Technical College, Georgia Department of Labor, Indeed.com).

### **Selection**

Employment opportunities are posted on the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Unified Government's website. Applications are reviewed, and eligible candidates participate in a written test, provided by a third-party vendor, and an OPAC (Office Proficiency Assessment Certification) speed and accuracy typing test. The agency is currently evaluating CritiCall. Test results are classified as pass or fail.

Applications for candidates that pass the testing are forwarded to the agency for a background investigation, followed by a "sit-in" (scheduled for off-hours/weekends so the candidate gets a feeling for the work schedule) and a polygraph examination.

An interview is conducted that includes the communications administrator, 911 training coordinator (or another supervisor if he or she is not available), and a representative from the ACC Human Resources Department. Successful candidates receive a conditional offer, contingent upon the candidate successfully passing drug testing and medical and psychological examinations.

In discussing its weaknesses, the Athens-Clarke County Communications Division describes the county's selection process as protracted and cumbersome. The agency has worked with the county's Human Resources Department and made recent strides to improve the process, including moving the application process to the internet. Applicants can go to the county's website, search job openings, view a job description and job-related requirements, and apply, using the NEOGOV system. The agency is also considering other potential options, including accomplishing as many steps as possible in a single day.

### **Promotion**

Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division personnel who seek promotion, including the "career ladder" step to senior communications officer, must apply for announced opportunities according to specific application requirements for each position. The qualifications of each candidate are reviewed, and the employees meeting the minimum requirements for the position must complete a written examination. All senior communications officer candidates who pass the test are elevated to that classification. The agency does not use eligibility lists as part of the promotional process.

If there are two or more qualified candidates for a communications supervisor position, the candidates who passed the written test are interviewed by the communications administrator and a human resources generalist, using a standardized set of questions. The interviewers must provide the Promotion Review Board (comprised of the chief of police, the communications administrator, the Human Resources director, and the Human Resources generalist assigned to the police department) with a copy of the questions asked and the candidates' responses. A written narrative of each candidate is also provided, using the ACC Human Resources Department's Applicant Interview Review and Justification form, setting forth the factors and criteria considered. Job-related factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, productivity/performance, years of service, education, specialized training, specialized skills, nature of the vacancy/assignment, disciplinary record, and awards/commendations received.

The promotion selection is made by the chief of police. Once the selection is made, the Promotion Review Board meets to discuss the legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons for promoting or not promoting candidates, as only the Board can confirm the promotion. Promotion decisions cannot be appealed (grieved) unless the employee can demonstrate adverse impact due to unlawful discrimination.

### **Training**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division is proud of its communications training program. Chief Freeman has indicated that he is a staunch supporter of training, and committed to increasing continuing education and training opportunities for Communications Division personnel.

Newly hired personnel attend a 40-hour, state-mandated, basic communications training course at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. This training is general in nature and not agency specific. In addition to the state training, ACC Communications personnel receive in-house classroom orientation training, regarding agency-specific policies, procedures, and systems. Orientation training lasts three to four weeks, depending on the workload of the training coordinator, who is responsible for conducting the training. A Classroom Training Objectives checklist is used to ensure all elements of the orientation process are covered with the new hire.

Following classroom training, communications officer recruits receive four phases of on-the-job training provided by agency communications training officers (CTOs). In the first phase of training, recruits learn call taking, geography, and fire dispatch. The second phase encompasses continued call taking instruction and exposure to the sheriff's office dispatch. In the third phase, recruits focus on ACC police dispatch and rotate assignments. During the fourth and final phase, recruits are exposed to the night shift for some "make or break" experience due to call volume and nature. The length of each training phase varies by employee.

New hires serve a one-year probationary period, which may be extended to an additional three months if the employee still needs work, but appears likely to improve.

According to the communications training coordinator, the agency reports that it has a 50-60 percent success rate in training new hires, and that the success rate has improved during the last five to ten years. Cited reasons for training failures include stress, inability to keep pace with call volumes, and the inability to successfully multi-task.

Training consists largely of the issuance of training bulletins, outside training and conferences, and in-service training administered by the training coordinator. The amount of in-service training conducted by the agency is limited due to workload and the very limited availability of overtime funding for training. The communications training coordinator relayed that most in-service training is provided to one or two communications officers at a time, and that he adjusts his work schedule to accommodate the different shifts. Recent in-service training offered included dealing with the mentally ill, suicidal persons, and domestic violence, as well as training related to the recent implementation of several technology platforms (e.g., VESTA 4, P25 radio system, and Motorola radio consoles).

Training

	2013	2014	2015
Hired	1	5	2
Released from Probation	2	0	1
Completed Training	2	0	2
Retained for Three Years or More	27	28	27
Average In-service Training Hours*	35	52	38

\* Includes new hire training

Training records are automated in the form of an electronic spreadsheet. Records sought for three randomly selected Central Communications Division employees were quickly located and found to be complete.

The Central Communications Division does not do pre-shift briefings, which could be used for training; however, the agency has recently implemented the Athens Area Crime Information Sharing Network (CISN). CISN is a Facebook-type blog system that facilitates information sharing among ACC Police Department employees, allowing communications officers to be kept in the loop regarding need-to-know information.

**Operations, Critical Incidents, Special Operations, and Homeland Security (Chapters 6-7)**

**Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance (QA) reviews are conducted on a primary basis by communications supervisors and secondarily as part of processing audio requests made by outside agencies. Communications supervisors are required to do twelve QA reviews for each subordinate during the year, of which eight must be a review of call taking and four of

dispatch audio. A heavier emphasis is placed on call taking, as a poor effort in call taking will likely result in a poor dispatch. In addition, certain event types must be reviewed (e.g., two fire, two in-progress calls, one domestic, and one missing person). The agency does not access protocol compliance. It was recommended that the agency develop a method of assessing the level of protocol compliance in order to track quality performance over time.

**Quality Assurance Reviews**

	2013	2014	2015
EMD QA Reviews Performed	N/A	N/A	N/A
Protocol Compliance Percentage for EMD	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other QA Reviews Performed	329	270	278
Protocol Compliance Percentage for Other*	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*The agency does not track protocol compliance as part of QA reviews

**Confidentiality, Sensitivity of information**

Recognizing that a well-informed public is essential to the existence of a representative republic, the agency provides access to public records in accordance with the Georgia Public Records Act, O.C.G.A. (Official Code of Georgia Annotated) Section 50-18-70. In addition to the law, Athens-Clarke County Police Department C2/03/06 defines procedures to be followed in responding to requests for agency records.

In general, the agency must provide the requested record within three business days or a timetable for producing it within that period. The Public Records Act provides a number of exemptions to public records inspection or that which is subject to redaction. The specific statutory exemption must be cited in denying a record. A reasonable charge may be collected for copying, search, and retrieval of such records.

Central Communications Division personnel are informed in writing that there are limited expectations of privacy when using agency telephones, facsimile machines, computers, and lockers, and that being within the communications center itself affords no expectation of privacy.

**Call Handling Procedures**

Communications personnel answer both 911 emergency lines and seven-digit lines that can include emergency or non-emergency service and administrative calls. Personnel are trained to see 911 lines as a priority, to answer them as quickly as possible, and to obtain the nature of the request, location, and any other pertinent information to ensure that the appropriate agencies and resources are dispatched. When answering seven-digit lines, the first order of business is to determine the nature of the call. If a public safety response is necessary, special attention must be paid to ascertaining the caller's location, as these lines operate without the benefit of ANI/ALI (Automatic Number Identification/Automatic Location Identification) or wireless Phase II location information.

If the call is for an emergency police or fire incident occurring within Athens-Clarke County, information is obtained and entered into the agency's computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. When entering an event into the CAD system, it is classified according to its respective degree of gravity, but may be reclassified based on circumstances such as time frame. Police and fire events that are deemed to be "in progress" require an immediate response by the appropriate public safety agencies. Guidance is provided for call takers in dealing with callers who are excited or upset, uncooperative, elderly or very young, do not speak English, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or have mental or medical incapacitation.

Non-emergency calls receive second priority to emergency calls being handled at the time. If the call is in relation to an emergency medical event, the call is transferred to National EMS, Inc., the region's emergency medical services provider, and the communications officer is required to stay on the line long enough to determine that no further response is needed from the police or fire emergency services. Calls that are administrative in nature are referred to the administrative offices of the appropriate agency.

If a caller's ANI/ALI information is incorrect and the caller can verify the correct address, the call taker completes an Incorrect ALI Report, which is forwarded to the Master Street Address Guide (MSAG) coordinator for correction. Misdirected service calls are redirected to the appropriate public safety answering point, as observed during a dispatch sit-along when a fire call was received for neighboring Madison County. The communications officer stayed on the line during the transfer to ensure the transfer was successful. In the event of a 911 hang-up call, call takers are to assume that an emergency exists, and the caller is unable to speak or communicate effectively. Law enforcement is dispatched to a "911 hang up" or "open line" call, which designates a possible emergency but unknown problem.

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department Central Communications Division does not initiate or process reports in lieu of dispatching public safety responders. The agency also does not currently accept text-to-911 messages.

### **Alarm monitoring**

The Athens-Clarke County Central Communications Division does not monitor external (i.e., outside the police department) alarms. Pursuant to state law, all alarms (i.e., burglary, fire, medical, call for police) must be directed to, and monitored by, a third-party vendor and cannot come directly to the public safety answering point.

### **Emergency Medical Dispatch**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division does not provide emergency medical dispatch (EMD) pre-arrival instructions. Emergency medical calls are transferred to National EMS, a commercial ambulance service that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). According to a representative from National EMS, the dispatchers provide

EMD (ProQA). ACC communications officers remain on the phone during the transfer to determine if there is a need to send fire department emergency medical technicians in support of the ambulance and/or the police, as well.

### **Amber Alert**

In 2015, the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division became a National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Call Center Partner by adopting ANSI-approved standards of best practices when handling calls of missing, abducted, or sexually exploited children. Both the chief of police and the communications administrator received NCMEC executive training, and all communications personnel received NCMEC call taker training. Although it is the police department's responsibility to initiate an Amber Alert, the Central Communications Division plays an important role in supporting notification and search activities.

### **Records Retention**

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department maintains a records retention schedule, adopted in accordance with the State of Georgia Local Government Records Retention Schedule and complies with all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to records retention.

### **Communication Systems**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division is equipped with the latest public safety communications technology, including ten Watson Mercury call taker/dispatch workstation consoles.

An Airbus DS VESTA 4 geo-diverse Next Generation 911 (NG911) capable call handling solution is installed in ten communications center workstations. Along with the VESTA 4 system, the agency acquired the Aurora MIS (Management Information System) package that will provide advanced analytics of incoming and outgoing calls for assistance with improving efficiencies. An Avaya BCM450 telephone system is used for internal communications.

TTY capabilities are built into the VESTA phone system, and a TTY phone is retained for backup capabilities. Communications officers receive training on the TTY system as part of their initial training, as well as retraining every six months. Semi-annual training is accomplished via PowerDMS with a training bulletin, followed by a five-question test.

Calls for service are entered into an Intergraph computer aided dispatch (CAD) system that was first implemented in 2007 and refreshed (hardware and software) in 2014. The CAD system is extended to police, fire, and sheriff's office field units through the use of Intergraph's Mobile for Public Safety (I/Mobile) mobile solution and automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology. The mobile data system is linked to the ACC Central Communications Division through the use of commercial wireless broadband technology.

## ASSESSMENT REPORT

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY (GA) POLICE DEPT., CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

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The CAD system front-ends an Intergraph records management system (RMS). Police, sheriff, and fire field units are equipped with mobile data terminals (MDTs). These MDTs are interfaced to the Central Communications Division via commercial wireless broadband devices and are equipped with automatic vehicle location (AVL) and Intergraph's I/CAD mobile software. Police units are equipped with Intergraph's I/LEADS records management field reporting software.

Motorola MCC 7500 IP dispatch consoles are used to send and receive voice transmissions to and from field units. Primary dispatch talk groups include the ACC Police Department (both east and west zones), the Clarke County Sheriff's Office, and the ACC Fire Department. Communications officers rotate radio dispatch assignments every two to three hours. Fire station alerting is accomplished through a MOSCAD system that communications officers find easy to use. A NICE digital recording system is used to capture and manage radio and telephone system traffic.

In October 2015, the agency migrated to a four-site/12 channel Motorola 800 MHz Simulcast P25 Phase II TDMA (time division multiple access) digital trunked radio system operated by the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government (ACCUG) Central Services Department. The new system replaced an analog Motorola SmartNet radio system that was installed in 1999 and had reached the end of its useful life, no longer supported by the manufacturer. In implementing the new system, the ACCUG entered into an agreement with the University of Georgia (UGA) to share the radio system. For its part, UGA built an additional radio site. Both ACC and the UGA have benefited from the partnership through improved radio coverage, greater interoperability, and the ability of each to back up the other's communications center.

Both the phone and radio systems upgrades were funded through a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).

Radio interoperability with outside agencies is accomplished in several ways. Many local, state, and federal agencies that regularly interact with ACC agencies are equipped with radios capable of operating on the ACC trunked radio system. The ACC communications center also has access to the VHF, UHF, and 800 MHz National Interoperability Channels (calling channels and associated tactical channels), as well as the ability to patch its 800 MHz trunked system to the state band, car-to-car, the University of Georgia at Athens Police Department, and the Georgia Information Network (GIN), via a Motorola Motobridge IP networking system. In addition, ACC maintains a communications van, equipped with: a mast; radios capable of operating on all public safety bands and amateur radio two-meter/70-cm bands; backup communications capability, a Raytheon ACU-1000 radio cross-connect system; WiFi capability; and shore/generator power. Annual testing of interoperable equipment is done by the ACC Department of Central Service's 800 MHz coordinator, pursuant to the Athens Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP).

Central Communications Division personnel have access to criminal history information, article files, and motor vehicle information (e.g., vehicle and driver license files) through the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC). Personnel must abide by GCIC regulations and may only access information for law enforcement agencies.

### **Facilities/Infrastructure**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division is located within the police headquarters facility. Because of the continuous presence of communications personnel, the Division is responsible for maintaining the security of the police facility (e.g., monitoring building security cameras).

Access to the ACC Central Communications Division is controlled by a security card access system. Employees are required to carry their access cards with them at all times to facilitate unassisted access for authorized personnel. Each entrance to the building is equipped with a two-way intercom connected to the communications center and door release buttons. Certain entrances are also equipped with closed-circuit cameras. An outside wall of the Central Communications Division, adjacent to public parking, is protected with bollards to prevent a vehicle from striking the building. Interior administrative access to the Communications Division is controlled with a key card access point, as is entry to the operations floor and the server room.

The ACC Police Department, including the Central Communications Division, has redundant electrical utility feeds, uninterruptable power supplies, and two generators (primary diesel and secondary propane) that supply the communications center in the event of a utility power failure. A Powerware UPS (uninterruptable power supply) sustains critical systems for up to 40 minutes between the time of a utility power failure and the generator start-up/transfer. Weekly full load tests are run and logged in the Auxiliary Power Supply Generator Test/Inspection Log. Proof showed annual preventative maintenance inspections by a local commercial vendor. Critical server, electrical, and radio rooms are protected with a dry agent fire suppression system.

### **Emergency Operating Plan**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division maintains an Emergency Operations and Disaster Recovery Plan, recognizing the need to change operations or evacuate the communications center when faced with system failures (e.g., loss of telephone or radio service) or life threatening hazards and situations in and around the communications center.

Communications shift supervisors are charged with remaining alert to changing environmental and technical considerations that affect the Division's ability to operate, using good judgment, and making decisions based on all available facts in an emergency situation. The ultimate decision to evacuate the Communications Center rests with the communications administrator or his or her designee and is based upon a risk assessment.

If a decision is made to evacuate the ACC Communications Center, Central Communications Division personnel will move to the backup center, co-located with the University of Georgia Police Department's (UGAPD) dispatch center. The two agencies share the phone system (geo-diverse server located at UGAPD) and trunked radio system. Emergency 911 and non-emergency lines can be rerouted to the UGAPD by contacting AT&T. An evacuation kit, containing supplies that include paper logs, office supplies, radio headsets, 800 MHz radios, spare batteries, and chargers is kept in ready should there be a need to evacuate. The supplies are verified and checked for operational readiness monthly.

In the event the county's trunked radio system fails, backup communications are conducted on national interoperability channels 8TAC1 (8TAC91) for police and 8CALL (8CALL90) for fire. If necessary, an interoperability communications vehicle is available through the ACC Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

The agency's Emergency Operations and Disaster Recovery Plan also includes strategies for mitigating the impact of an external disaster or other emergency on the communications center, and for assisting in recovery efforts. Considerations include the staffing necessary to handle increases in call volumes, radio traffic and operational activities, the personal needs of Central Communications Division personnel, resources necessary to sustain operation, and the transportation of employees.

Central Communications Division personnel receive annual training on the emergency operations plan via a training bulletin and a ten-question test administered via PowerDMS. Annual reviews of the Communication Division's Emergency Operations and Disaster Recovery Plan for all three years merely stated that the plan was reviewed and that the agency found all information contained therein to be accurate and up to date. The agency reports that there were no activations of the plan during this assessment period, nor any annual evacuation exercises conducted.

### **Special Events Plan**

The Central Communications Division works together with the police department in dispatch support of special events. The area is host to the University of Georgia and Sanford Stadium (capacity 92,746), which is the home field for the Georgia Bulldogs football team. Six to seven times a year, home games draw well over 100,000 people to the area for the game and/or tailgating. The police department, along with the Central Communications Division, works very closely with the University of Georgia at Athens Police Department (UGAPD), as well as other agencies (e.g., the Georgia Highway Patrol and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation) that support the event.

### **Tactical Dispatching**

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department Central Communications Division does not participate in tactical dispatch communications operations. According to the ACC communications administrator, the agency hopes to implement a tactical dispatcher program by the end of 2016, to work closely with the police department's Strategic

Response Team (SRT). It is believed that this program would be mutually beneficial by allowing dispatchers to gain a better understanding of what goes on in the field and by providing the SRT direct field support.

### **NIMS/ICS**

The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Police Department Central Communications Division is part of many public safety plans throughout the area, including the county's Emergency Operations Plan, Athens-Ben Epps Airport Disaster Plan, Strategic National Stockpile Plan, and the Hazardous Material Plan. In these plans, the agency serves to provide communications support, and would likely require additional personnel to handle increased call volume and radio traffic. A fully equipped emergency operations center (EOC) is co-located with the ACC Central Communications Division, and includes a command center and breakout rooms.

The agency reports that there have been no natural or man-made disasters, civil disturbances, mass arrests, bomb threats, hostage/barricaded person situations, or acts of terrorism that required implementation of the Incident Command System or National Incident Management System.

### **H. Standards Issues:**

This section provides specific information on standards found to be in compliance after on-site "adjustments" were made. Adjustments may include modifying agency policies and directives, creating documentation, and an alteration of the physical plant.

The agency has one standards issue.

*6.4.2 The agency will provide a written Evacuation Plan which includes:*

- d. documented annual training exercise or actual evacuation for all agency personnel. (M)*

ISSUE: The agency did not conduct any annual training exercises and there were no actual evacuations during this assessment period. An annual review of the evacuation plan was conducted, but this did not constitute a training exercise, as required.

AGENCY ACTION: The agency immediately devised a plan to conduct an evacuation tabletop exercise. A lesson plan was developed by the communications training coordinator, approved by the communications administrator, and presented to the assessor. Tabletop exercises were conducted on March 29 and March 30, 2016. Participation of all agency personnel was verified. The agency plans to conduct a training exercise annually.

**J. 20 Percent Standards:**

CALEA agencies must be in compliance with at least 80% of applicable other than mandatory (O) standards. The agency is free to choose which standards it will meet based on their unique situation. This section administratively clarifies these standards for the agency, assessors, and CALEA Commissioners.

The agency was in compliance with 87 percent of applicable other-than-mandatory (O) standards.

**K. Future Performance / Review Issues:**

This section does not apply.

**L. Table: Standards Summary:**

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Mandatory (M) Compliance	<u>158</u>
Other-Than-Mandatory Compliance	<u>39</u>
Standards Issues	<u>1</u>
Waiver	<u>0</u>
(O) Elect 20%	<u>5</u>
Not Applicable	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	<u>212</u>

**M. Summary:**

The Athens-Clarke County (GA) Police Department Central Communications Division is a well-equipped and well-managed public safety answering point that provides call taking and dispatch services for the Athens-Clarke County police and fire departments, the city of Winterville police and fire departments, and the Clarke County Sheriff's Office. The agency is staffed by 32 (authorized strength) professional, dedicated, and committed civilian communications personnel and a sworn (Captain) 911 communications administrator who provide quality public safety communications services to the communities they serve.

Communications officers and public safety agency clients are supported through the latest technology. This technology includes: Geo-diverse Airbus VESTA 4 Next Generation 911 capable call taking system; Intergraph computer aided dispatch system (CAD); NICE digital telephone and radio recording system; automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology; mobile computer terminals (MCTs), equipped with broadband air cards and I/Mobile CAD client and I/LEADS in-vehicle report-writing software; and an 800 MHz Motorola P25 trunked land mobile radio system.

This was the Athens-Clarke County Central Communications Division's second public safety communications reaccreditation and first Gold Standard Assessment (GSA) effort. Since the Central Communications Division is a component of the CALEA accredited Athens-Clarke County Police Department, the multiple enrollment crosswalk process was utilized for this assessment, with 43 standards certified as in compliance for the purpose of this public safety communications assessment. During this on-site assessment, one file was classified as a compliance issue, compared to no standard issues during the previous on-site assessment in 2015. Agency files reviewed were found to be generally well maintained, and personnel interviewed during the GSA assessment process were found to be cooperative, candid, professional, and knowledgeable. Annual reports were filed by the agency as required by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.

The agency does not conduct a citizen survey specific to the public safety communications function. The chief of police indicated that the agency plans to modify the citizen survey that is currently used for the police department (CALEA accredited) to include questions specific to the performance of the Central Communications Division. As part of his public outreach effort, the assessor spoke with representatives of the public agencies served by the Athens-Clarke County Central Communications Division, including the Athens-Clarke County police and fire departments, the Winterville police and fire departments, the Clarke County Sheriff's Office, and National EMS. Each representative spoke highly of the agency and its personnel, as did the acting manager of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government.

During the public telephone session, the assessor received three telephone calls, all from residents of the agency's service area. One caller had contacted the agency several times over the assessment period and said that dispatch personnel were always extremely helpful and responsive to her. Two other callers brought up issues that were not relevant to this assessment (i.e., a wireless location technology concern and the unrelated actions of police officers in the field).

Assessors were able to observe and/or interview 18 (56 percent) of the 31 current Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Central Communications Division employees. All were found to be dedicated, knowledgeable, and competent in their work and exhibited teamwork in their efforts. Likewise, the ACC Police Department is committed to professional excellence, as evidenced by the fact that it has maintained both CALEA public safety communications accreditation (since 2010) and law enforcement accreditation (since 1987).

The assessment team found the Athens-Clarke County (GA) Police Department Central Communications Division to be in compliance with all applicable standards, with the exception of 6.4.2, bullet d. Agency personnel were found to be dedicated and committed professionals, knowledgeable of agency policies and procedures, and supportive of the CALEA process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William R. Bleyle". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "William" written in a larger, more legible font than the last name "Bleyle".

William R. BLEYLE  
Team Leader  
April 25, 2016