

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) is a 24-hour operation that processes incoming emergency 911 and non-emergency calls for Police, Fire, and EMS assistance. The department also operates a Teletype Terminal in compliance with the Virginia Criminal Information Network and the National Crime Information Center, and National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System.

Effective October 18, 2025, DEC took over operations of Public Safety's Wireless Communications division. Wireless Communications are responsible for overseeing the county's radio systems. It supports all county departments by servicing mobile and portable subscribers and providing in-vehicle radio and lighting solutions to ensure the safety of citizens and staff.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide emergency communication services for county operations.
- To invest in employee growth, training, and career development.
- To reduce call-processing and response times & expand quality assurance.
- To modernize and strengthen system infrastructure, facility security, and cybersecurity.
- To enhance operability with Police, Fire, Emergency Management, and regional partners.

ANNUAL FISCAL PLAN SUMMARY

Description	FY25 Actual	FY26 Original	FY27 Approved	% Change
Personnel	\$11,106,806	\$11,507,759	\$11,528,434	0.2%
Operation	1,910,039	1,935,649	2,112,841	9.2%
Capital	106,346	42,030	42,030	0.0%
Subtotal	<u>\$13,123,191</u>	<u>\$13,485,438</u>	<u>\$13,683,305</u>	<u>1.5%</u>
Recommended Adjustment	0	0	-368,138	100.0%
Total	<u>\$13,123,191</u>	<u>\$13,485,438</u>	<u>\$13,315,167</u>	<u>-1.3%</u>
Personnel Complement	91	101 *	98 **	-3

* FY26 includes the addition of the Radio Shop, including 10 full time positions, which will be moved to Emergency Communications in FY27. These costs are retroactively reflected in FY25 actual costs.

** Includes the transfer of 3 IT specialist positions to the Information Technology personnel complement.

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY25	FY26	FY27	26-27 Change
Workload Measures				
Total Incoming/Outgoing Calls	528,149	488,474	505,500	17,026
Average Dispatch Time for Priority Calls (Seconds)	101	138	115	-23
Number of Priority 1 Calls Processed in 90 Seconds or Less	20,000	19,117	20,000	883

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The FY27 budget for the Department of Emergency Communications totals \$13,315,167, reflecting a decrease of \$170,271 or 1.3% from the previous year. In FY26, the department assumed operations of the Radio Shop, previously budgeted within Police; for presentation purposes, this change is reflected in both FY25 actuals and the FY26 approved budget and includes the relocation of 10 full-time personnel positions from Police to the DEC complement.

The personnel component is \$11,528,434, reflecting an increase of \$20,675 or 0.2% from the previous year. The personnel component includes an increase for rising employee salary, healthcare and benefit costs and also reflects the transfer of 3 IT specialist positions from Emergency Communications to Information Technology.

The operating component is \$2,112,841, reflecting an increase of \$177,192 or 9.2% from the previous year. This increase covers funding for new software, including applicant screening and specialized mental health services, as well as contract escalators for existing software services. It also includes electricity funding for new radio tower sites, and a new vehicle for the transportation of staff. The capital component remains unchanged from the previous fiscal year. As part of an exercise in fiscal prudence, this budget includes an operating adjustment equivalent to 3% of the department's FY26 approved budget.

In FY24 the Emergency Communications Center became an independent department, this included the transfer of funding from the Wireless E-911 budget in the Special Revenue Fund to the General Fund. The County has collected this funding from the State 911 Services Board since FY00, which is based on \$0.75 per month per cellular phone.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A significant number of resources have been committed to focus on work/life balance and recruitment. DEC has successfully coordinated and completed two Basic Communications Academies with a 100% pass rate. With each of these academies, DEC has continued its partnership with the Community College Workforce Alliance to complete an internship for new applicants and students taking the Emergency Telecommunicator Certification Course.

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DEC's commitment to investing in training opportunities reflects the organization's dedication to equipping its workforce with specialized skills needed to excel in their roles. In FY25, DEC held the first Central Virginia 911 Leadership Symposium with participants from 26 localities within the State. DEC has also established a Peer Support team, consisting of Communications Officers and Supervisors, to offer support to employees. This peer support team will receive training tailored to industry-specific needs. These training courses and others provided have enabled DEC to offer comprehensive and industry-specific training to its team, further strengthening its workforce and enhancing overall capabilities.

In March 2025, DEC, along with the Police Division, was re-accredited as CALEA Tri-ARC. This ensures adherence to industry best practices and international standards. Maintaining these high standards is crucial for both training and customer service within DEC. In December 2025, an upgraded phone system was implemented, enhancing caller location capabilities, future video-to-911 use, and translation services for texting 911.

The creation of the Tactical Dispatch Team in FY24, in collaboration with Emergency Management and Henrico Sports and Entertainment Authority, demonstrates a proactive approach to public safety and event management. This team enhances communication and coordination during large-scale events, supporting first responders and citizens.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Emergency Communications Center offers a community awareness program to educate the public on the 911 communications system. Educational materials are available in brochures, PowerPoint presentations, or in-person to community groups and organizations. The 911 presentation navigates participants through the questions callers can expect to be asked by the dispatcher and what it is like to be a dispatcher. The presentation is suitable for all ages to ensure that all of Henrico's citizens feel knowledgeable and confident about the 911 system. Employees presented this material to multiple groups during FY25, including presentations and tours for the Citizens' Police Academy, the Senior Citizens' Police Academy, and elementary school classes. In FY25, DEC acquired the 911edu+. This educational technology simulates dialing or texting 911 from a cell phone to the 911 Center.

Presentations to the community are offered as an informational resource to educate users of the 911 system on how to mobilize help quickly and efficiently in the event of a police, fire, or medical emergency. These initiatives assist children who may know their address or phone number to prepare them to calmly provide information to assist in citizen and responder safety.