| Topic: | 9-1-1 Communications System |
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| Speaker: | Dave Schultheis WB6KHP, SCC Communications, Marsha Garcia, SCC Fire |
| Date: | Thursday, 6-apr-00, at 19:30 |
| Event: | Cupertino ARES general meeting, Orientation Training |

The following is a summary of the presentation made to CARES in the 9-1-1 system.

## General
The first 9-1-1 system was set up in Santa Clara in 1984.  There were other systems in place prior to that.  The purpose of the system is to call the local police, fire, or other support agency.

9-1-1 is a switching system, not a place.  There is no single location within Santa Clara County where ALL 911 calls are received.  9-1-1 is also a routing system.  Depending on where you are located when you place a call determines what agency will respond (municipality or police jurisdiction). For instance, Cupertino contracts with the Santa Clara County Sheriffs Department.  If you are in Cupertino and call 9-1-1, the Santa Clara County Communications receives the call and the Santa Clara Sheriff will respond.  If the City of San Jose has jurisdiction across the street and you call from there, the 9-1-1 system will route the call to the San Jose Police Department and they will respond.  Santa Clara County Comm dispatches for Cupertino from the County Comms Center at Curtner and Almaden.

## Cellular 9-1-1
9-1-1 Cellular calls get routed to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) in Vallejo, CA.  CHP reports 51% of all 9-1-1 calls are cellular and, therefore, go to CHP first.  When calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone, County Comm recommends you state your location (city, cross street) and nature of the emergency.  They will connect you to the 9-1-1 dispatch center that has jurisdiction over that area.  When connected, then provide all necessary details.

In the future, the cell system will route to the local agency.  Today, if you live in Cupertino, you can program the local 7 digit emergency number into your cell phone.  Then, when you travel outside of Cupertino, use the 9-1-1 system.

## 311 System
While 3-1-1 is for calling a local agency for non-emergencies, it is not currently available in Cupertino (maybe later).  However, it is in place for Pacific Bell customers in San Jose. Conventional wisdom says, when it doubt, call 9-1-1.

## 9-1-1 Dispatch process
Santa Clara County Communications dispatches for the County Sheriff, County Fire, and Medical.  They also answer phones and dispatches for over 70 agencies full-time or after hours including the Water District, Power, Sanitation, and Parks.  When a call is received, it is entered into the Dispatch Computer accessible by all agencies.  The call is then routed to the appropriate agency for dispatch.  9-1-1 operators are mandated by County EMS (Emergency Medical Services) to offer help through the use of Emergency Medical Dispatching Instructions.  A person at the other end of the phone has the option to refuse the help. NOTE: if you begin to render medical assistance, you cannot stop until formal help arrives.

## 9-1-1 During an Emergency
As Dave stated, "After the shaking stops, the chaos begins."  The 9-1-1 dispatch center has plenty of phone lines.  During a disaster, they all will be ringing at once and it is impossible to answer them all.  Every available dispatcher is answering every available telephone as fast as they can, but delays can still be expected.  Even if there were twice as many telephones being answered, there would just be that many more calls queued up to be dispatched.

The public phone system is only designed to handle ~10% of the customer base at any given time.  If you try to make a call and there is no dial tone, DO NOT HANG UP.  STAY ON THE LINE.  You are in the queue for a dial tone.  If you hang up and immediately try again, you are back at the end of the queue.  Pay Phones come on-line first after a power failure.

When you do get through, all calls are triaged, then put in queues.  The nature and severity of your call RELATIVE TO ALL OTHERS determines the order of the response.  Today, there is no formal provision for interrogating the 9-1-1 system for the status of a call.

**History**
23-Apr-00  Original
27-Apr-00  Corrections