

Unit 4

Basic Call Processing Techniques

4.1.0 Unit Goal: Summarize the process of applying effective basic communication skills.

4.1.1 Learning Objective: Define the term Communication Cycle.

- The communication cycle is the process by which a message is sent by one individual, and it passes through a chain of recipients. The timing and effectiveness of a communication cycle is based on how long it takes for feedback to be received by the initial sender. Communication cycles are present in social circles and business landscapes and exist in various forms.

What is the Communication Cycle? Reference.Com, Retrieved May 10, 2018,

<https://www.reference.com/world-view/stages-communication-cycle-155f7714c51b52c3>

4.1.2 Learning Objective: Identify the six components of the Communications Cycle.

- For communication to succeed, both parties must be able to exchange information and understand each other. If the flow of information is blocked for some reason or the parties cannot make themselves understood, then communication fails.
 - Sender - The communication process begins with the sender, who is also called the communicator or source. The sender has some kind of information—a command, request, or idea—that he or she wants to share with others. In order for that message to be received, the sender must first encode the message in a form that can be understood and then transmit it.
 - Receiver - The person to whom a message is directed is called the receiver or the interpreter. In order to comprehend the information from the sender, the receiver must first be able to receive the sender's information and then decode or interpret it.
 - Message - The message or content is the information that the sender wants to relay to the receiver.
 - Medium - Also called the channel, the medium is the means by which a message is transmitted. Text messages, for example, are transmitted through the medium of cell phones.
 - Feedback - The communication process reaches its final point when the message has been successfully transmitted, received, and understood.
 - The receiver, in turn, responds to the sender, indicating comprehension. Feedback may be direct, such as a written or verbal response, or it may take the form of an act or deed in response.
 - Noise and Context – Noise: This can be any sort of interference that affects the message being sent, received, or understood. It can be as literal as static over a phone line or esoteric as misinterpreting a local custom. Context: This is the setting and situation in which communication takes place. Like noise, context can have an impact on the successful exchange of information. It may have a physical, social, or cultural aspect to it.

Nordquist, Richard. *The Basic Elements of the Communication Process*. Thought.com 2018, February 15. <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-communication-process-1689767>

4.1.3 **Learning Objective:** Define the different types of listeners.

- Discriminative - In this listening type, the objective is to focus on the sounds. At its most basic level, this is akin to distinguishing the speaker's gender, or the number of people in a conversation. This is the most important type because it forms the basis of the other four. People who are sensitive to the speaker's tone, the rate of speech, pitch and emphasis may better understand when there are differences in meaning. When considering discriminative listening there are three key parts:
 - Ability to hear. If you lack an ability to hear well you will have difficulty when you try to discriminate between sounds. In different people, this can be acuter on specific frequencies, where they may have more trouble picking sounds from a bass voice than a highly pitched voice.
 - Awareness of sounds. When you're a native speaker you often recognize the sounds of vowels and consonants that may not have been said by a speaker. In English, a listener may hear "this sandal" when what was actually said by the speaker was "this handle." Being attuned to the sound structure will make you a much better discriminative listener.
 - Understanding nonverbal clues. Often a person's words do not communicate their true feelings or emotions, which means discriminative listeners need to look at the way a speaker acts, or how the words are said to really understand the intended meaning of the speaker. In our native language, we rapidly learn to distinguish the different sounds, but it soon forms a habit which makes it very difficult to hear the different sounds in another language. This is the reason many people struggle to speak a second language perfectly because they are unable to fully distinguish all of the subtle sounds.
- Comprehensive - The goal of comprehensive listening is to understand the message the speaker is communicating. The problem is that many people often interpret the same conversation in different ways, depending on their individual and social backgrounds. To fully comprehend what is being said requires you to hear the words, understand the body language and take it to the next step by extracting the key message from a long spiel.
 - This listening type is found in nearly all aspects of our life and is one of the primary ways that we learn. In university, we listen to lectures from the instructor, and what we learn is based on how well we can listen. The same applies to your work, as you listen to new procedures, instructions, briefings, and reports, how well you can do your job is directly related to understanding what you're being told. If you don't listen effectively, your work will suffer.
 - Comprehensive listening demands that you concentrate on the message and its source, and you can work to improve your ability by focusing on these three variables.
 - Vocabulary - It's hard to determine the precise relationship, but having a larger vocabulary significantly increases your ability to understand what's being said. Luckily, it's never too late to improve the different words you know, so make a

conscious effort to learn new words and understand the unfamiliar. In a pinch, you can also use the context of what's being said to help you understand a word you don't know, but this can hinder your overall understanding if you get it wrong.

- Concentrating - It's difficult to stay focused when you're in a lecture that isn't exciting or a meeting in the office that is drawn out and dancing around the point. We've all had times in our lives where we can admit that we haven't concentrated on what was being said to us. Sometimes this happens because your attention is divided, or the listener is preoccupied with something else. Sometimes the listener is simply more concerned with their own needs and lacks the curiosity, interest, and energy to stay focused. Good concentration skills require motivation and discipline.
- Memory - Because you cannot process information without using your memory, it's critical in comprehensive listening. It helps you to establish expectations of what you'll encounter and gives you the background and experiences to function in the world. Understanding at its simplest point is knowing the meaning of words, concepts, and ideas, so you can communicate with other people.
- Relationship - Relationship listening is a therapeutic listening type because the goal of the listener is to be a sympathetic ear, without requiring detailed verbal responses. The best example is helping a friend talk through a problem and is critical as a base for building strong interpersonal relationships. Being the person that's there for a friend when they need to "get things off their chest" is what can make your friendship even stronger.
 - Relationship listening requires you to listen to the information, the focus you need to have is simply understanding the speaker. There are three key behaviors that help to boost your abilities in this listening type:
 - Being present - You need to be paying attention to the speaker. This is critical because they have a problem they want to tell you about, and you can't let your focus drift. All your focus needs to support that you're listening and be careful because whilst you can read the speaker's non-verbal behavior, they can also read yours! Make sure you are present and pay attention to the speaker. One of the best ways to do this is with eye contact, looking comfortably at the speaker helps you connect much better than a frequently shifting gaze as you look all around the room. Your body language also reinforces your attention, leaning towards the speaker with an open posture shows your interest, while leaning back with crossed arms shows a lack of it. Build on this with smiles, frowns, nodding and small phrases like "oh I see," "uh huh" and "yes" are all supportive, and using a pleasant tone of voice with a genuine concern for the other party will help your relationship immensely.
 - Being supportive - There are many responses that can have an adverse effect on your relationship, and you should never interrupt the speaker, change the subject or spin the conversation so you can talk about yourself. All of these prove your lack of concern for the speaker, and in many cases giving advice and attempting to influence the conversation will have an adverse effect on the relationship you're trying to build. Often the best response is to remain silent because many speakers are simply looking for a sounding board – someone to listen while they talk

through the problem they are having. To be a great relationship listener you need to know both when to talk and when to listen, and they generally listen much more than they talk. Aim to be discrete, show a belief in the ability of the speaker and have patience as they talk it out. Master these three and you'll make great progress as a relationship listener!

- Being empathetic - This is all about feeling and thinking with the speaker. If you're truly an empathetic listener, you can see the problem from the speaker's eyes and feel what they feel. If you can do this effectively, you'll form very strong relationships with your friends. Obviously, the more experience you have in your life allows you a better chance to do this, as an individual who has never gone through a divorce, lost a child, or declared bankruptcy is going to have a much more difficult time relating to their friends who are going through a similar problem. The risk is that you can't be effective as an empathetic listener without getting involved.

Focus on learning the most you can about the other person and accept them even if there are certain aspects of their behavior you don't agree with. We're all capable of being fantastic relationship listeners and doing it well will strengthen your interpersonal relationships immensely.

- Critical - When listeners evaluate a message and respond with their opinion, this is called critical listening. You need to scrutinize what is being said and play an active role because it usually requires you to make a decision, form an opinion or solve a problem. Making a judgment requires you to assess the situation and requires you to listen to what's being said while analyzing it at the same time.
 - While practicing critical listening you need to ask yourself
 - What is the speaker trying to say?
 - How do I feel about their opinion?
 - What is the main argument that is being presented?
 - Does what I am hearing align or differ to my own beliefs and opinion?
 - Being able to listen critically is fundamental to being able to truly learn. All of the decisions we make on a daily basis have a basis (however small) in critical listening. It's important that you have an open mind and not let bias or stereotypes influence your judgment, and by doing so you'll become a much better listener. Focus on these three aspects as you perfect your critical listening skills.
 - Is the speaker a credible source, who is both an expert on the subject being discussed and that I can trust to be giving honest and unbiased information?
 - Reflect on what's being said and decide for yourself if it's true. Consider the sources of information, the data used, and if it really is the right conclusion that has been drawn.
 - Think about the speaker's intent, and make sure you're not following an emotional response. Sound critical listening skills are based on logic.
- Appreciative - The final type of listening is listening for the sake of pure enjoyment. This includes music, theater, television, radio, and films, where the ultimate response is the one from the listener (not the speaker). Listening appreciatively differs for everyone, and the quality of it depends on three factors.

- Presentation. This includes the medium, the setting and who the speaker is. Sounds can be produced in many different ways, and their presentation is key – most of us have particular ways we like to listen.
- Perception. Your expectations play a large part in your appreciation, which is based on your attitude. Everything we listen to has been selected by us and is the core of what we listen to in the first place.
- Past experience. There are many reasons why we enjoy listening to certain things, whether we're an expert in the area, have positive experiences linked to the sounds, or simply want to learn.
 - Being an appreciative listener is not fixed, and as you learn and discover more about yourself, you can open your mind and appreciate more of what is out there in the world and become a better appreciative listener.
 - Most people take listening for granted. They see it as something that just “happens” and don't try to develop their skills. It's only when you stop and look into the details that you realize it's one of the most important skills you can develop and will have a positive impact on every other aspect of your life. Not only personally, but in your business as well. Find out in this course how you can apply all of this to really listen to your customers. Start your journey today and build your own fantastic skill set – for every type of listening.

Bennett, Travis. 5 Types of Listening to Become an Awesome Listener, Udemy. 2014, April 7.
<https://blog.udemy.com/types-of-listening/>

4.1.4 **Learning Objective:** List various types of ACTIVE listening techniques.

- Verbal Listening Techniques:
 - 'Yes', 'right', 'OK' 'ah ha' etc. These short interjections are great for making unobtrusive signals that you are listening and if used at the right time will not interrupt the person's train of thought. It creates an environment for positive change.
 - Reflecting back words, thoughts, and feelings. Here you are reflecting back the words, thoughts, and feelings of your caller, subtly emphasizing their own words e.g. 'so, you say you want to make some big changes?' e.g. 'you sound as if you are really excited...'
 - Respond with affirmations. Using affirmations such as 'it sounds like you handled that well' or 'it seems like you've made tremendous progress' is a great way to bolster the self-esteem of the individual and is a great way to keep a positive frame of mind while really showing you are listening to understand them.
 - Ask relevant questions. Questions should not be a series of pre-planned questions, instead, intuitively asked based on the person's responses. The person will know you are listening to them when you ask questions that relate to what they have been saying.
 - Clarification. Asking clarifying questions is one of the more active listening techniques. e.g. 'you mentioned earlier that your priority was your family, now you have mentioned that your career is the most important thing...which is more of a priority right now?'

- Summarizing. Every now and again providing a brief summary of what has been said serves as a useful check that you have heard and understood the caller correctly.
- Non-verbal active listening techniques - Use of appropriate body language also demonstrates that you are listening and especially important when your caller's is in full flow when verbal interruptions by you might hinder.
 - Eye contact - While you don't want to stare at an individual, having eye contact shows you are listening. If you are taking notes be sure not to let this stop you from looking at your person for the entire session!
 - Positive facial expressions - Smiling, looks of empathy, etc. all naturally responding to a person will indicate you are listening. Avoid expressions which might indicate judgment on your behalf such as raised eyebrows or the shaking of your head.
 - Nodding - A slight nod of the head is great for showing that have heard and understood.
 - Body posture - Leaning slightly towards you're the individual and an open posture (arms open as opposed to folded) indicate you are open to and interested in what they are saying.
 - As with any technique they should not be over-used and always used authentically. A final word of warning, if you use active listening techniques but do not listen will not be fooled!

Starr, Julie. A guide to coaching and being coached. Personal-Coaching-Information.com 2007, November 8. <https://www.personal-coaching-information.com/active-listening-techniques.html>

4.1.5 **Learning Objective:** Identify call-taking listening techniques.

- Emotion Labeling: This skill is the first you would attempt to use in a critical conversation. You are simply identifying and labeling the emotion that you hear in your caller. When a caller is telling you how difficult their life is, and you hear them crying and obviously upset, be ready to respond. Respond to the emotion you hear, not the content. Try saying "You sound to me to be very upset." When anger is very obvious, say, "You sound to me to be very angry." This demonstrates to the caller that you understand and identify with their emotion and that someone is actually listening to them. Don't tell them how they are feeling, but rather how they sound or seem they are feeling to you.
- Paraphrasing: Simply repeat or summarize in your own words the story that the caller just told you. You can initiate your statement by saying "are you telling me that..." or "are you saying that..." This skill also demonstrates that you have listened, understood, and are able to repeat and verify the information you heard. Your actions and words help build rapport with your caller, which leads to a higher level of trust.
- Reflecting/Mirroring: By repeating the last word or phrase the caller just stated, you can verify the information and let them know that you heard them.
- Effective Pauses: Most people are not comfortable with silence and will start to talk. These pauses are also used to emphasize something you have just said or something you are about to say.

- Signs of Encouragement: When you are on the phone, eye contact and body language are obviously not effective tools of communication. Therefore sounds, words, and acknowledgments such as "Uh huh," "OK," "Alright," or "Go ahead," will accomplish a similar objective.
- "I" Messages. Use "I" messages to tell your caller how their actions are making you feel when they say or do something.
- Open-Ended Questions. These are questions that require more than just a "yes" or "no" or a one-word answer. They allow us to get the subject talking, bide for more time, and gain intelligence. We don't want to ask questions that only solicit very quick responses.

Deuchar, Capt. George. PowerPhone Inc. Dispatching Discussions, 2009, March 12.

<http://dispatchingdiscussions.blogspot.com/2009/03/active-listening-skills-for-crisis.html>

4.1.6 **Learning Objective:** Identify methods of effective communication.

- Verbal Communication - Verbal communication involves the use of words while the delivery of the intended message is being made. It can be one-on-one, over the phone or in group settings, etc. It is a method of effective communication that is personal and has to be used more than only phone calls and emails whenever possible. The medium of the message in case of verbal communication is oral. Simple speaking is verbal communication. Seeing the person with whom face-to-face communication is taking place helps in gauging the response of that person by understanding their body language and assists in active participation in the dialogue.
 - Storytelling - Storytelling is a form of verbal communication that is effective. A vital organizational function is served by it as it helps in the construction of common meanings for the individuals in the organization. Stories assist in clarifying key values and also help in demonstrating the way things are done in an organization. The tone, strength, and frequency of the story have a relation with higher organizational commitment. The quality of stories that are told by the entrepreneurs is related to the capability of securing capital for their organizations. Stories can help in serving to reinforce as well as perpetuate the culture of an organization.
 - Crucial Conversations - Even though the process is similar, more skill, reflection, and planning is needed for high-stakes communications in comparison to daily interactions at work. Examples of communication that involves high-stakes consist of presenting the venture capitalist a business plan and asking for a raise. Apart from these, several times in our professional lives, we have conversations that are crucial – discussions in which stakes are high, emotions run strong and opinions may differ.
- Written Communication - Written communication cannot be avoided in the workplace. It is present everywhere and consists of traditional paper and pen documents and letters, text chats, emails, typed electronic documents, reports, SMS and anything else that might be conveyed by the use of written symbols like language which includes any documents that are a part of the day-to-day business life. Such methods of communication are indispensable for any formal business communication and also for the issue of legal instructions.

The methods of communication that mainly make use of written communication consist of formal business proposals, press releases, memos, contracts, brochures, handbooks and the like. How effective written communication is will depend on the style of writing, vocabulary, and grammar along with clarity. Written communication is most suitable in cases that require detailed instructions when something has to be documented or in situations where the person is too far away to speak in person or over the phone. Some of the written methods of communication include:

- Social Media - Tools of social media such as Facebook can be used in an effective way in the organizations for the purpose of communicating between locations, divisions, departments, and employees. Certain tools such as Yammer are specifically designed for creating social media networks in the confines of a particular domain of business.
- Email - The email communication in organizations has become very common and is a highly essential tool for the sharing of information with one, hundreds as well as thousands of employees. It is usually a significant component of the communication plan and even though it may not be a replacement for face-to-face or other methods of communication, it is easily accessible and inexpensive.
- Oral Communication - The other type of verbal communication includes the spoken word, either over the phone or face-to-face, video conferencing, voice chat or any other medium. Different types of informal communications like the informal rumor mill or grapevine and formal communications such as conferences and lectures are the forms of effective oral communication. Oral communication is used in discussions as well as conversations that are informal and casual. How effective oral communication is will depend on the speed, volume, pitch, voice modulation, clarity of speech and also the non-verbal communications like visual cues and body language. Some of the important oral methods of communication include:
 - Face-to-Face Communication - This is usually a preferred method of communication, although it is not realistic all the time, especially in organizations that are based in several locations around the globe. However, tools like video conferencing make approximate face-to-face communication possible and help even large organizations in creating personal connections between management and staff.
 - Meetings - Meetings are common in almost all the business settings and now it has become possible to augment them via the use of the tools of technology which allow the participants in the remote locations to participate in the discussions, although they are not present physically on the meeting site.

While using verbal communication, the person needs to be aware of his/her tone of voice, inflection as well as speed. Use of sarcasm and angry tones should be avoided; otherwise, the person with whom you are communicating will go on the defensive. While speaking to your team or to a group of people, you should ensure that you speak loudly and clearly so that everyone is able to understand what you are saying. Use of the microphone should be made if a group is being addressed in a large room. Verbal communication is best used when something has to be discussed in detail or when someone has to be complimented

or reprimanded. Verbal communication makes the conveying of thoughts faster and easier; however, it makes up just 7% of all human communication.

- Nonverbal methods of Communication - “The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said” according to Peter Drucker.

Communication by sending as well as receiving wordless messages is a part of nonverbal communication. Such messages are a vital part of any communication and generally provide reinforcement to verbal communication. However, they can also convey their own feelings and thoughts.

- Physical Nonverbal Communication - A major role is played by the nonverbal communication in the way you communicate with other people. It cannot be relied on as a sole means of communication except in cases where the person makes use of sign language. Physical Nonverbal Communication, or body language, consists of body posture, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures like a pointed finger, wave and the like, touch, the tone of voice, overall movements of the body, and others.

You need to be aware of nonverbal communication. Your movements, eye contact, and gestures, the way you sit and stand all help in conveying a message to the person with whom you are communicating. Gestures should be used appropriately or the hands should be left at your sides. You should avoid fidgeting as it is distracting and the arms should not be crossed as it sends a signal of being closed off or angry. You should always look into the eyes of the person to whom you are speaking and never stare or roll your eyes when they are talking. The most common among all the nonverbal communication is the facial expressions.

- For example, a frown or a smile conveys emotions that are distinct and are difficult to express by means of verbal communication. Research has shown that nonverbal cues or body language along with facial expressions, the tone of voice and body stance account for almost 55% of all the communication that takes place. As per the research, only 7% of the message’s comprehension by the receiver is based on the actual words of the sender, 38% is on the basis of paralanguage (the volume, tone, and pace of speech) while 55% is on the basis of nonverbal cues (body language).

Research has also revealed that nonverbal cues may also have an effect on whether you are successful in getting a job offer. Judges who examine the videotapes of the applicants were able to make assessments of their social skills even when the sound was off. They had a look at the gesturing rate, time that was spent on talking and the dress formality for determining the candidates who would be most successful for the job socially. Thus, it is essential to consider the way one appears in the business and also what one says. Our emotions are conveyed by our facial muscles. A silent message can be sent without uttering a word. A change in our emotional state is visible in the change of our facial expression.

For example, if we focus on being confident prior to an interview, the confidence will be conveyed to the interviewer by our face. Putting up a smile even when feeling stressed can reduce the stress levels of the body.

- Paralanguage - A significant component of nonverbal communication is the way something is said, instead of what is said. This consists of a style of speaking, tone, emotion, stress, pitch, intonation and voice quality. It helps in the communication of interest, approval or the absence of it. According to research, 38% of all communications are accounted for by the tone of the voice. The other nonverbal communication forms generally communicate the personality of a person. These consist of:
 - Aesthetic communication or creative expressions like painting, dancing, etc.
 - Appearance or the style of grooming and dressing that communicates the personality of a person.
 - Space language like landscapes and paintings communicate taste as well as social status.
 - Symbols like ego-building, status, and religious symbols.

For being effective communicators, it is important to align our tone, appearance and body language with the words that are being conveyed by us. Research has indicated that when individuals lie, they blink more often, shrug and shift their weight. The tone is another element of communication that is nonverbal. A tone that is different can alter the message's perceived meaning. The emphasis on a particular word illustrates the way a tone can convey a lot of information.

- Visual Communication - Visual communication is the third method of communication which take place through the help of visual aids like color, illustration, graphic design, drawing, typography, signs and other electronic resources. Visual communication comprising charts and graphs generally reinforces written methods of communication and in the majority of the situations replaces written communication completely. "A picture is worth a thousand words" is an adage which shows that verbal communication can on several occasions be more powerful than verbal as well as nonverbal communication. Developments in technology have made an expression of visual communication easier than what it was before. There is no one correct way of communicating, but you need to have awareness of what is appropriate and in which situation. The chosen methods of communication depend on the situation. Put yourself in the shoes of the employees Using your good judgment regarding the situation and being considerate of your employees will make you an effective communicator. A better understanding of the various methods of communication along with the different communication styles will help in knowing as well as dealing with people in a better way, clear any misconceptions or misunderstandings that may exist and thus contribute to the organization's success.

Shethna, Jesal. EDUCBA. Different Effective Methods of Communication. 2016, March 1.

<https://www.educba.com/different-methods-of-communication/>

4.2.0 Unit Goal: Summarize the process of applying basic call-taking skills. Prior to starting Unit 4 section 4.2.4: students must have a current, nationally recognized, and accredited

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification. See student pre-requisites for additional information.

4.2.1 Learning Objective: Identify basic call-taking techniques – 6Ws.

- The call taker is the primary link between the public and the emergency services they need. The abilities of a call taker contribute directly to the success of the public safety response. There is a general order in obtaining information from a caller although not all information may be needed for every call. The following is basic information related to most types of calls.
- The 6 Ws”: Where, What, When, Who/Why, Weapons. The general order in which information is obtained is:
 - Location (Where)
 - Type of Incident (What)
 - Severity (Including time lapse - When, Weapons, injury, threats or assault, drugs or alcohol involvement)
 - Suspect or suspect vehicle information (Who/Why) as well as the direction of travel Victim/Caller/Witness and call back number information. For any call, these questions should be asked. These “All-Caller Questions” are:
 - Location
 - Where help is needed
 - Where the incident occurred
 - Where victim or witness is
 - Where contact needs to be made, if necessary
 - What type of incident is being reported
 - Law enforcement requests: what type of incident is occurring or has occurred
 - Fire requests: what type of fire response
 - Medical calls: chief complaint and, if possible, patient age/gender, the status of consciousness and breathing
 - Severity including:
 - Timelapse
 - Weapons
 - Drugs/alcohol
 - Injuries
 - Threats
 - Hazards
 - Other questions affecting responder and caller safety if warranted by the type of call
 - Caller information
 - Location
 - Call back number
 - Whether contact with caller needs to be made by responders

4.2.2 Learning Objective: Identify basic call-taking techniques – location.

- Location: Always confirm location information. Have the caller repeat the location. Locations may be exact house addresses, intersections, referenced from a landmark, route and boxes, mile markers, etc. It is important that geography be a primary training topic for every call taker and dispatcher. Knowledge of the service area is vital to the efficient processing of calls. Verify the ALI information if available. Obtaining a location where help is needed is the one single piece of information that must be obtained in order to start assistance.
 - Street address: includes any individual numbers of the house, apartment complex, etc. and the street name. The street address should also include apartment, space or suite numbers. Directional indicators such as north, south, east or west (or any combination) are important to the street address. It is imperative that the call taker know the difference between pre-directional (the direction indicator coming before the street name or number) and post-directional indicators (the directional indicator coming after the street name or number). An example of a pre-directional indicator use would be 14324 N.E. Pine Avenue. The post-directional indicator use would have the address as 14324 Pine Avenue N.E. In a number of areas of our state, there are duplicate addresses whose only difference is the position of the directional indicator. If such areas exist in your jurisdiction, you will need to be aware of them in order to verify this information.
 - If an address includes a street-type designation (Street, Avenue, Lane, Way, Court, Circle, or Boulevard, etc.), that identifier should be recorded with the address. Some street names are duplicated with different street-type designators (Sunset Avenue, Sunset Court, etc.).
 - Positional address: This is when the caller provides the location as based on his or her physical relationship to a landmark or building. The caller may describe a location from a common landmark or in reference to where they are making the call (i.e., on the right side of the house as you are facing the front door). The caller may describe his/her position as being on the 3rd floor, west wing, or south side of a building. If a caller does not know where they are calling from, there are ways you can assist them:
 - Ask them to look for landmarks.
 - Have them name businesses nearby.
 - Look at street signs.
 - Look at the phone number listed on the phone (not always accurate).
 - Ask where they were driving from and to.
 - Look for pieces of mail that may have an address on it.
 - If near a residence, get license plate numbers from cars in nearby driveways and run them.
 - If inside a residence, what are the names of the people who live there?
 - Type of location: Residence, business (including business name), field, school, park, intersection, street, driveway, hospital, mall, racetrack, alley, etc. If dealing with an alley, find out what the alley is between or behind. If it is an apartment building or condominium, get the name of the complex.
 - Rural routes: Often, rural routes are not planned on a countywide basis, but rather for a certain area. If an address is a rural route, the exact route and box number

should be obtained as well as detailed directions from the main road. In recent years, rural route and box addresses have been eliminated because they are not compatible with addressing systems needed for Enhanced 9-1-1. However, some callers may resort to this former addressing system when under the stress of an emergency.

- City: Do not hesitate to ask a caller from which city they are calling. Many cities duplicate street names. You must determine the location of occurrence to assign the proper jurisdiction. The location of the caller, victim, witnesses, etc. must also be obtained if different from the location of occurrence for law enforcement calls so that responders know where contact needs to be made.
- A caller's location may not be within the jurisdiction where the incident occurred. In this case, your department policy will prevail as to how the call is handled. It is important to remember that callers needing assistance may not always be within your jurisdictional boundaries but should be within your power to assist. You may help them by notifying another agency, making a referral, transferring their call, or providing them with a telephone number.

4.2.3 **Learning Objective:** Identify basic call-taking techniques – incident.

- Type of Incident: The type of incident must be determined in order to properly assign police, fire or EMS units (or any combination). Detailed information on the incident type can better determine the level of response, however, that much detail is not always available. Be inquisitive; ask questions that clarify the incident for you. Most agencies have a policy on a basic response to call types where very little information can be obtained. For instance, a hang-up call may warrant an automatic law enforcement response. Upon arrival, the police officer sees smoke and flames and the fire department would then be dispatched.
- Severity or Seriousness: Each call type has a level of severity or seriousness to it. Determining the severity of the call sets up the proper response to the call. Listen to what is being said, but also what is being implied, background noise, etc.
- Time Lapse: In-progress calls usually have a higher priority than "cold" reports. A burglary call is received where the caller hears someone in the house. This call would be classified as an emergency in most cases. When dealing with an in-progress call, determine if the caller is safe to stay on the line so you can update the responding units as changes occur. This may also provide the caller with a sense of safety while involved in the incident. Another time, a burglary is reported where items were taken from the residence sometime in the past several weeks while the residents were on vacation. If it was determined no danger to the caller existed, then this call would be treated as a non-emergency or lower priority call. Each agency should have a clear understanding of terms such as: just occurred, occurred recently, occurred prior, etc. "Just occurred" may mean within the last 5 minutes for one agency, and 5-10 minutes for another.

Instructor Note: Prior to starting Unit 4 section 4.2.4: students must have a current, nationally recognized Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification. See student pre-requisites for additional information.

4.2.4 Learning Objective: Identify when CPR is needed.

In the following section, all information is from the CPR LifeLinks Implementation Toolkit, Part One: Telecommunicator Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation p. 1-32. This portion of LifeLinks and is not taught in its entirety.

[CPR LifeLinks Toolkit Final.pdf \(911.gov\)](#).

- Define the three (3) steps of Telecommunicator CPR (T-CPR).
- T-CPR is a three-step process where telecommunicators:
 - Work together with 9-1-1 callers to identify potential OHCA patients.
 - Provide callers with pre-arrival CPR instructions.
 - Coach callers to perform continuous CPR until professional rescuers assume care.

Instructor Note: Each organization should have a tailored portion here dealing with their individual organization's comprehensive dispatch protocol process that addresses their individual safety standards, response allocation and priority, patient care, and information for responders on all emergency calls.

Instructor Note: Suggested scenario to pose to the class - identifying the difference between the need for the Heimlich Maneuver vs CPR. This is one of the most common mistakes civilians make when requesting help.

- Identify the two (2) most critical questions to identifying an OHCA.
 - Is the patient conscious?
 - Is the patient breathing normally?
- Identify the common barriers to assessing patient breathing and how to overcome them.

Emotional Distress	Be assertive
Caller Does Not Understand "Conscious"	Rephrase "Are they awake?"
Open Eyes, Seizure-Like Movements	Shake and shout
Agonal Breathing	Look for chest rise and fall; listen to breathing over the phone
Caller Is A Health Care Professional	Treat all callers the same

Instructor Note: Each entity should provide samples (possibly recordings of calls that went well and calls that did not go well) to illustrate their individual protocols and recommendations for overcoming the hysteria barrier.

- Describe the three (3) common barriers to the caller performing CPR Instructions.

Caller Refuses Instructions	Be decisive
Patient Positioning	Get help/sheet drag/assist and assure
Fear of Hurting Patient	Reassure the caller with facts and redirect

Instructor Note: An instructor should provide samples (possibly recordings of calls that went well and calls that did not go well) to illustrate their individual protocols and recommendations for overcoming CPR performance barriers.

- Explain the three (3) key components to caller chest compressions.

Compression rate

- A rate of 100 – 120 compressions per minute (CPM) is optimal.
- Metronomes are inexpensive, there are several free metronome desktop and smart phone applications are available.
 - The metronome is an invaluable tool for the telecommunicator, it allows them to focus on the task at hand instead of trying to count for the caller.
 - To confirm that the caller has begun compressions, and to ensure the compressions are at the appropriate rate, the caller should be asked to count out loud.
- Counting out loud may tire the caller though, so it is not necessary for them to count for the duration of the call. Caller can only stop counting out loud if the telecommunicator takes over the verbal counts. One participant in the T-CPR process must always be counting out loud.
 - The goal with asking the caller to count out loud is to ensure compliance with instructions and to confirm that the caller is delivering compressions at the appropriate rate.
 - Once appropriate rate of compression has been established, the telecommunicator may take over counting for the caller.
- Compression depth evidence suggests that proper CPR compression depth is associated with survival.
 - A depth of two inches is optimal, but how is a caller to be expected to assess that depth? The reality is, they really cannot. So, when providing instructions, callers should be encouraged to “push as hard as you can.”
 - With caller, there is little concern that they will push too deep. In fact, typically callers do not push deep enough.
- During compression oxygenated blood is moved out of the heart and lungs to the brain and other vital organs.
- Only during the decompression phase (“recoil”) will blood come into the heart.
 - When the chest recoils, decreased pressure in the chest cavity creates a vacuum, causing the heart and lungs to refill with blood that will once again be moved through the body with the next compression.

Instructor Note: Using rescue breaths vs. not using rescue breaths is a policy that is addressed at the agency level. Please instruct students to get with their agency regarding providing instruction on rescue breaths.

- Describe what happens if there is a pause in compressions: When proper compressions are delivered, it will take approximately thirty (30) compressions before sufficient pressure is created to begin circulating blood through the body (“Continuous Chest Compressions”, 2016).

- If compressions are stopped or interrupted, it takes only three (3) seconds for blood pressure to fall to zero.
 - Once chest compressions have begun, it is very important telecommunicators not distract callers (by asking unnecessary questions, for example) and lead them to pause their compressions.
 - Two or more rescuer-ventilations – always ask the caller if there are others that can trade out with the caller to administer compressions
 - If there are others the caller can trade out with to administer the compressions, make sure that the rhythm of administering the compressions is not paused as the rescuers trade out.

Instructor Note: Training should include simulation of suspected OHCA calls. Simulations allow telecommunicators to apply their knowledge in environments where they can safely learn from mistakes and oversights.

- Simulations can be based on real OHCA calls (some of the calls should NOT be OHCA calls but calls that could be mistaken for one) and should present scenarios with different learning objectives. Simulate not only “typical” cases (e.g., cases where the patient is a male in his 60s who suddenly collapsed and requires compression-only instructions) but also less common cases (e.g., cases where the patient is a child, where a caller objects to doing CPR, where a language barrier complicates communication, or where an adult was apparently choking).
- Simulations can be done in several ways. Telecommunicators at their terminals can field mock OHCA calls from colleagues to practice using protocols and call-handling skills, for example. Alternatively, colleagues can sit back-to-back, one person with caller’s script, the other with Telecommunicators CPR protocols to choose from given the situation the “caller” describes. How the simulations are set up and run is up to the individual organizations administering the course.
- Simulations should encompass each of the Three Stages of T-CPR. That is, they should require telecommunicators to identify OHCA, start CPR instructions, and provide continuous coaching for several minutes.
 - After such exercises, colleagues should debrief in small groups where they can challenge, learn from, and support each other. They can then run the simulations again, applying feedback and lessons learned.
- Telecommunicators should practice verbally giving CPR instructions through simulation. It is important considering data suggesting patient outcomes may be linked to the number of OHCA calls a telecommunicator processes in each period.
- Telecommunicators should process at least ten (10) OHCA calls per year, either real or simulated.
- Discuss when an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) should be used.
 - Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are medical emergency response devices used to provide an electrical shock to help restart a patient’s heart.
 - As a rule, telecommunicators should only ask if an AED is available if the event is in a public location with more than one caller present. The priority should be on continuous chest compressions.

- AEDs are commonly available in schools, sports arenas, public buildings, airports, shopping malls, and department stores.
- Discuss challenges to the delivery of CPR instructions over the phone.
 - Cardiac arrest secondary to trauma
 - If an individual is bleeding out always staunch the bleeding prior to administering CPR
 - CPR Patients with DNR/POLST orders
 - The telecommunicator shall instruct to the called to attempt CPR unless they conclusively know the individual is deceased
- For all other unusual circumstances that pose challenges to the delivery of CPR instructions, simply work through a refocus back to administering CPR first.

4.2.5 **Learning Objective:** Identify basic call-taking techniques – weapons.

- Weapons: The fact that weapons are reportedly involved changes the priority of the call greatly. The call taker should obtain who has the weapons, what type, where the weapons are, and will the caller and other people be safe from the weapon. Questions about weapons should include:
 - Type of weapon
 - Gun
 - Handgun
 - Rifle
 - Shotgun
 - Other
 - Description
 - Revolver
 - Semi-automatic
 - Automatic
 - Other information, color, etc.
 - Caliber
 - Ammunition
 - How carried
 - Amount
 - Cutting/Sharp-edged Instrument
 - Knife
 - Sword
 - Machete
 - Other
 - Description
 - Blade length
 - Other
 - Other weapons
 - Type
 - Description

- How used

Was the weapon used, threatened, implied, and brandished? If it is kept in a vehicle, where is it usually kept? Is there access to other weapons on the premises? If so, where are they?

4.2.6 **Learning Objective:** Identify basic call-taking techniques – persons.

- Injuries: Finding out if there are injuries is a vital piece of information on police, fire and EMS calls. The notification of injuries or other medical problems or issues would prompt an additional fire/EMS response.
 - Where is the injured party located?
 - How many persons are injured?
 - What is the nature of the injuries?
- Alcohol or Drug Use: May raise the severity of the call due to the potential for participants to behave in an unpredictable manner.
- Assaultive or Threatening Behavior: Due to the potential threat of injury to persons at the scene and responders.
- Location of Caller, Victim, or Witness: It is important that the safety of the caller/victim/witness be addressed. They may be at a separate location from where the incident occurred. They may or may not be in the presence of the suspect. For fire and emergency EMS calls, the caller may be trapped or exposed to fire, smoke, or dangerous materials. SAFETY OF THE CALLER OR ENDANGERED PERSONS SHOULD ALWAYS BE CONSIDERED. ASK THE CALLER, "CAN YOU SAFELY REMAIN ON THE PHONE WITH ME?" OR "IS IT SAFE FOR YOU TO STAY ON THE PHONE WITH ME?"
- Description of Persons: Get complete descriptions using standardized formats and descriptors. Head-to-toe, outside-to-inside.
 - Descriptions of people are obtained in the following order: race, gender, height, weight, hair color, eye color, scars, marks, tattoos, facial hair, glasses, and any other pertinent information such as amputated limbs, etc.
 - Use NCIC abbreviations for descriptors:
 - Racial Descriptors: W, B, A, I, O
 - Hispanic or Latino if policy dictates
 - Gender: M, F
 - Age: Actual age/DOB if known, or A/Adult J/Juvenile
 - Height: 5'5" = 505; 6'2" = 602, etc., or "thin, medium, or heavy build"
 - Weight: three digits, i.e., 95 lbs. = 095, 135 lbs. = 135
 - Hair and eye color abbreviations: refer to NCIC codebook
 - Clothing descriptions are obtained from HEAD to TOE and from the OUTSIDE to the INSIDE. Outside to inside identifies the most visible item (largest to smallest). If the suspect is wearing a jacket (outside) and a t-shirt (inside), the jacket becomes the most visible item.
 - Hat or headgear
 - Coat, jacket, sweater
 - Shirt, blouse, top

- Pants, shorts, skirt, leg coverings
- Shoes
- Accessories or other
- For multiple suspects, have the caller describe one at a time, for example, #1: WMA 6'03", #2: BMA male 5'11"
- Other details: The state of mind (angry, depressed, or delusional) or physical condition including alcohol, medication, and narcotic involvement are important details for caller and responder safety purposes.

4.2.7 **Learning Objective:** Identify basic call-taking techniques – vehicles.

- Description of Vehicles: Get complete descriptions using standardized formats and descriptors.
 - Descriptions of vehicles are obtained in the following order: Color, year, make/model, body style, accessories, the license number, and the license state. There is an acronym for this order: CYMBALS (Color, Year, Make/Model, Body Style, Accessories, License, and State).
 - Use NCIC codes for color, make, model, style, and state of issuance.
 - Use your agency's phonetic alphabet when verbalizing or dispatching the license information.
 - For multi-colored vehicles, the primary color or the color that is "on top" should be listed first (brown over tan).
 - The direction of travel: The direction of travel may be described in different ways:
 - An actual direction (north, south, east or west)
 - "Down" the street...
 - "Up" the road...
 - "Toward" the front, back, side of the building....
 - "Across" the street or field...
 - "Through" the store...

A call taker should narrow down these directions as much as possible. Knowledge of geography is important for call takers and dispatchers. If a caller says the suspect is driving toward the river, the call taker should be able to determine the direction based on the location of the call. If necessary, the call taker can determine the proper direction of travel by using maps.

4.2.8 **Learning Objective:** Identify basic call-taking techniques – reporting party.

- Basic Reporting Party Data: Once details of a call are obtained, the basic reporting party data should be documented for record keeping purposes. This basic data includes:
 - Name of the caller.
 - Home address.
 - Home telephone number.
 - Is the caller a victim, witness, or reporting for someone else?
 - Date of birth of the caller if appropriate to check for protection, no-contact, or other court orders.

- The callback telephone number for the caller if different from the home telephone number.
- Calls should not be terminated too quickly. The call taker should let the caller know what will happen with their call before hanging up.
- Ask them to call back if the situation changes. DO NOT prolong the call longer than necessary. Tell the caller what you are going to do with their call (respond, refer, call back, dispatch, etc.). DO what you say you are going to do. If you said you would get information and get back with them, then do that. DO NOT give specific response times (“they’ll be right there”, “they’re on the way”, and they’ll be there in 5-10 minutes”). Some alternative wording is: “The police department has been advised”, “Units have been dispatched” (if they have). Stay on the line with the caller if the situation is changing rapidly and if it is safe for the caller to do so. Give the caller an action to follow to prevent panic or escalation if appropriate. Be courteous and professional in your closure of the call. It is okay to say thank you to a caller, even though they called you. It is a courteous way to end the call.

4.2.9 **Learning Objective:** Identify basic call-taking techniques – documentation.

- Call Documentation - Record ALL pertinent and important information.
 - DO NOT rely on memory.
 - DON’T rely on someone else to “hear” you with verbal updates. On manual systems, obtain an accurate time of receipt of a call (incident cards, response sheets, etc.). Correct times on a call are very important.
 - CAD entry: enter calls immediately so the accurate time is recorded.
 - Use the acceptable “shorthand” of your agency. Document important information in short statements as opposed to run-on sentences. Consider the use of an agency-accepted set of abbreviations.
 - Update the call when additional pertinent information is obtained.
 - Remember: telephone lines, radio transmissions, MDT/MCT messages, and other types of communications are or may be recorded. This type of documentation can be subject to public disclosure. Do not say or write anything you would not want to be reviewed in court or by the public.
 - Use clear terminology and language. Avoid using legal terms or police/fire slang or code words.
 - Use practical and prioritized sequencing to your questioning. Get in the habit of asking for information in a standardized order and format asking first for the location where help is needed. If you use the same questioning sequences, good habits will form. This means you are less likely to forget to ask specific information or become confused during a fast-paced or highly emotional call. Obtain sufficient information for a proper response. The least amount of information you must have is the location where help is needed. Whenever possible, obtain information on the type, severity (including weapons, injury, and alcohol/drug use), time lapse, etc. The goal is to obtain all pertinent information.
 - Taking assertive control of the conversation does not mean rudely interrupting the caller. Do not let the caller lead you but do listen to the caller. Many times, they will

answer your question before it is asked. Determine the priority of the call on the reported details, not on the attitude of the caller.

- Do not hang up unless you are comfortable with the information.
- Determine the best method of questioning. Some questions need to be phrased “open-ended”, asking the caller questions that will require them to explain what is going on. Other questions should be phrased as closed-ended, where the caller’s choices are limited. Avoid leading and secondary questions such as, “was he a white male?” this is leading the caller. Let the caller tell you and only ask one question at a time.
- The call taker is the first public safety person involved. If the call is changing rapidly, ask the caller if he/she can safely stay on the line to provide updated information. If the caller cannot remain on the line, is it safe for them to lay the telephone down without hanging up?
- Visualize the scene and the situation. If you think it, then ask it. Make sure you understand the situation. You will be better able to determine the appropriate level of response and relay accurate information.
- Dangerous Habits:
 - Four common assumptions that result in inaccurate or insufficient information being obtained:
 - All calls are the same; Do not be pulled into thinking all calls are the same. Neither all calls about the same incident nor all calls of one type are necessarily the same. Additional calls about one incident may have supplementary information or indicate a change in the status of the incident.
 - The call does not sound real. Do not disbelieve the caller just because the call does not sound real. Callers may be in shock or in a state of confusion.
 - The reporting party is hysterical. The excitement level of a caller should not automatically make a call a high priority. Do not under or overestimate the severity of the call based on the caller’s demeanor. People react in a variety of ways to a crisis.
 - The reporting party is not very intelligent because they speak slowly or do not speak English. Do not treat an elderly, non-English, or special needs caller as if they are not capable of providing quality information. This may result in an angry caller.
 - The caller is a frequent caller; therefore, the call is unlikely to be important.

NOTE: Most people will access the public safety emergency system only once or twice in their lives.

4.2.10 Learning Objective: Identify basic call-taking techniques – call routing.

- Proper Routing of Calls:
 - The general nature of the reported incident determines the primary responder (police, fire, or EMS). Some calls require a combination of public safety agencies to respond.
 - Law enforcement calls with hazardous materials involved should also initiate a Fire/Hazmat team response.
 - Law enforcement calls where injuries are present also warrant an EMS response.

- A Fire/EMS call where a crime scene exists needs a law enforcement response.
- Fire/EMS calls where traffic control is needed should get a law enforcement response also.
- Fire/EMS calls where responder safety is in question should warrant a law enforcement response.
- Unknown Type of Call - Agency policies and procedures should outline how an unknown type of call will be handled. These may be 9-1-1 hang-up or other calls where only a location can be obtained. A common method is to send law enforcement first and they will determine if further responses are needed.
- Referral Calls - Find out exactly what help the caller needs before referring the call. Know your agency and community's resources to make an appropriate and accurate referral. If you are gathering information from the caller to relay to another agency or department, make sure you record accurate information. In most cases, it is more efficient to either transfer the caller or have the caller place a call to the other agency him/herself.
- Responder Safety - The thoroughness and accuracy of the call taker directly affect law enforcement, fire and EMS responder safety. You must obtain and provide accurate information. Calls must be prioritized correctly. This includes all the information you can obtain about:
 - Weapons
 - Assaultive or threatening behavior
 - Location of the suspect(s)
 - Alcohol or drug use
 - In-progress vs. "cold" calls
 - Hazardous material involvement
 - Infectious disease or bio-hazard information only as allowable by agency policy
 - Protection, no-contact, restraining order information, particularly those with "caution" notations
 - Wanted/warrant information
 - Responder safety flags or information
 - Information about the presence of hazards at the site, some of which may include:
 - Animals that may pose a threat to the responder (i.e., loose dog in the backyard).
 - Physical hazards such as downed wires, roadway obstructions, hazardous conditions, covered in-ground swimming pool, etc.
 - For those agencies using a CAD (computer-aided dispatch) system, it may be possible to check features such as:
 - Premises file information. This file may designate information such as hazardous material storage, history of violence or weapon storage/access, specific medical information on a patient (i.e., a baby with an apnea monitor).
 - Previous event/history file. This feature may allow a Call Taker to check a specific address for information about previous calls. Previous calls of domestic or other types of violence or assault, drug activity, warrant arrests, etc. can be provided to responders.

- Events in proximity file. This file may allow you to see what other calls are going on in the area. This may allow the call taker to see related events or catch a duplication of the call is entered.
- If these files are readily available to the call taker, it is recommended that they are checked on every call for the safety of responders, unless agency policy dictates otherwise.

Call Processing. Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, Telecommunicator Program Office; Telecommunicator I – Basic Call Taker Page 71-81, Student Resource Guide 2011. <https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/images/training/T1-%20Combined%202011%20Student%20Resource%20Guide%20010914.pdf>

4.3.0 Unit Goal: Summarize the process for classifying calls for service.

4.3.1 Learning Objective: Explain the difference between routine, non-emergency and in progress calls.

- Routine - habitual or mechanical performance of an established procedure
Routine. Merriam-Webster, 3-Retrieved May 10, 2018.
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/routine>
- Non-Emergency - not of, relating to or constituting an emergency nonemergency medical care
Nonemergency. Merriam-Webster, Retrieved May 10, 2018.
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nonemergency>
- In Progress – going on; taking place; happening
In Progress. Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition 2010.
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/in-progress>

4.3.2 Learning Objective: Explain the importance of proper call classification for public safety calls for service.

- Call classification involves the sorting of calls for service by urgency. The most urgent calls are answered first, with the less urgent calls placed in line. As the most urgent call is handled, the other calls in line are dispatched and resolved. Each call carries its own classification code (priority), which helps the call taker and dispatcher determine which calls are more important.
- Call prioritization may be assisted by the agency's CAD system. As the call taker enters the information into the CAD, he or she chooses a call determinant code, which is translated to a priority level. For example, an "officer needs assistance" call may receive the highest response priority – Priority 1, while a parking complaint may receive the lowest priority – Priority 6. Within this range, all calls for service can be prioritized. When the CAD system arranges the calls for dispatch, it lists all of the Priority 1 calls first, followed by lower priority calls. This ensures that the most urgent calls are answered first. Some CAD systems will also recommend which units should be dispatched to a specific call depending on availability and location.

- Police calls range from urgent to routine, with some calls handled completely by phone. The call taker must ask the right questions to determine the exact nature of the call so that the proper call classification is entered. For example, is it a barking dog complaint or a possible prowler in the area? The barking dog is a low-priority call, while the prowler call would rate a higher priority.
 - In one case in Philadelphia, a call was received that was misclassified as a vandalism call – a car window broken in a parking lot. In reality, a customer was in her car, waiting in line at a fast food drive-through when an unidentified male broke her windshield with a stroke of a baseball bat. The call should have been classified as a higher priority assault instead of vandalism. This mistake caused a long delay in response, with a highly traumatized victim waiting alone in a cold parking lot. Proper questioning could have appropriately classified the call and determined the proper priority.
- The use of an approved protocol for police call-taking can direct the call taker to ask the proper questions in the proper order. Using a protocol can standardize the call-taking process and help to properly categorize and prioritize each call. A protocol assists in gathering the necessary information for each particular call.

Emergency Telecommunicator. National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch (NAED). Chapter 5, Page 97. Call Classification.

https://books.google.com/books?id=HEKvYe01Ze0C&pg=PA96&lpg=PA96&dq=emergency+call+classification&source=bl&ots=7pERPQD9km&sig=6K-GXZPTgk_J2JjgSfZfZ2uRryl&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjG8ovt-fvaAhVL_4MKHVivC4MQ6AEIWzAJ#v=onepage&q=emergency%20call%20classification&f=false

4.3.3 **Learning Objective:** Explain the importance of maintaining responder and public safety when dealing with calls for service.

- Call Information - The dispatcher is the first person to gather clues and cues about an emergency. An experienced, well-trained dispatcher is able to gather a lot of high quality, vitally important information that can help first responders form an early understanding of what they will be facing upon arrival at the emergency scene. In some dispatch centers, the questions asked of callers are scripted or there may be prompts to help dispatchers gather the essential facts.
 - Callers are often distraught when calling 9-1-1 and the dispatchers have the difficult task of both calming the caller and extracting quality information from them. If you have spent any time as a dispatcher or in a dispatch center during the processing of a critical emergency call you understand this can be a very challenging task. In haste, the callers often abbreviate what they are saying. Some may become agitated and scream at the dispatchers, complicating the ability to understand.
 - Depending on the type of emergency, location and time of day, a dispatch center can get dozens of calls about an emergency. The massive influx of 9-1-1 calls can be overwhelming depending on the number of dispatchers on duty.

Gasaway, Rich. Dispatchers Role in Situational Awareness. SAMatters.com

<https://www.samatters.com/dispatchers-role-in-situational-awareness/>

- The call takers Role - In April 2009, three law enforcement officers were killed after being shot while responding to a domestic incident in a Northeast U.S. suburb. A mother and son were arguing when the mother called 9-1-1 and calmly told the telecommunicator the son had weapons in the house. The telecommunicator did not pass that information along to officers and, when the first two officers arrived on the scene, her 22-year-old son was standing behind his mother and fatally shot both officers on the front porch as well as a third officer who arrived as back-up.
 - According to reports, the call taker asked whether the man had weapons and the caller replied, “Yes. They’re all legal.”

None of this information was passed along to officers. And the telecommunicator did not ask any additional information about what type of weapons he had, or how many. Did the telecommunicator play a role in officer safety in this incident?

We can “buckle the belt” with training. Predictable is preventable, right? According to APCO’s Public Safety Telecommunicator course, “family disturbances are typically considered the most hazardous calls to which public safety officials respond. Statistics indicate a significant percentage of family disturbances result in assaults against response units, especially law enforcement. This is primarily because people are extremely emotional during family arguments and tend to view an officer’s presence as an invasion of their privacy, as well as an attempt to interfere with their personal problems.” (APCO PST1 7th Edition, Module 11)

Basic training tells us calls like this (the mother and son arguing) already pose a higher risk to responders, so gathering relevant information becomes even more important. We gather the relevant five W’s — where, when, what, who and weapons. We ask the caller whether the suspect has long guns, short guns, what type of guns and how many. We ask what other weapons the suspect may have — knives, bats, clubs, swords?

We can “control their speed” by gathering relevant information.

According to the course text, “it is important to gather information from callers about whether weapons are being used, threatened or available in any incident. Never send a response unit to any dangerous or potentially dangerous situation without advisement on weapons.”
- In March 2014, one telecommunicator resigned while another was terminated in the Southeast U.S. after neglecting to pass on relevant information associated with reports of a triple homicide — hearing active gunshots and receiving a phone call from a neighbor reporting a barn on their property where a suspect may be hiding. Responders searched the woods for two hours, never finding a suspect or victims. Sharing relevant information could have helped responders find the victims as well as take precautions to locate an armed suspect.
 - What if the suspect left the scene? How would officers know who they are looking for, or if they encounter the suspect en route to the scene? Again, training tells us to gather suspect descriptions in a certain order — head to toe — and then relay it to responders to ensure officers can quickly identify the person they seek.
 - What if the suspect left in a vehicle? Yes, the same training says CYMBALS should be employed by the telecommunicator to gather relevant information for responders —

the color, year, make, body style, other identifying marks, license plate number, and state, so they may identify the vehicle quickly.

If officers approach the vehicle, or the suspect on foot, with a clear description of who he is and the style of weapon he has, perhaps they employ different methods when engaging. Additionally, if officers understood where on the property the suspect might have been (his location within the location) and where his guns may be, would they have asked the caller to step outside rather than approach the door? What if, when officers approached the home in the first scenario, a premise or caution note were entered into CAD on this address, noting the resident has access to a large cache of guns?

We may never know the answer to these questions, but available training material certainly shows we can attempt to gather relevant information and relay it quickly to responding officers, so they know “what’s important now” and, as a result, make appropriate tactical decisions.

- The Radio Dispatcher’s Role - The call taker’s quick attention to proper information gathering is only relevant if the radio dispatcher passes that relevant information quickly and accurately to the responding officers. While we can debate national standards on when the official clock starts (is it when the call reaches the PSAP? When the call is answered? When the call taker confirms a valid address?), all agree the goal is to dispatch nearly every type of law enforcement emergency within 60 seconds of call receipt. “What’s important now” is getting the call out to responders quickly, with relevant information first!
 - In January 2008, two Southeast U.S. telecommunicators neglected to dispatch relevant information in the case of a woman reporting a child screaming for help, banging on the rear window of a passing vehicle. The report turned out to be the last known sighting of Denise Amber Lee, a 21-year-old wife and mother of two who had been abducted by a stranger from her home in a neighboring county hours earlier. Complacency won the day and two public safety professionals neglected to prioritize what was important, preventing officers in the area from obtaining critical location information that could have resulted in an arrest and successful missing person recovery.

According to training shared nationally by Lee’s husband, Nathan, the pair of telecommunicators reportedly made a conscious decision not to dispatch relevant information relayed verbally to them by a call taker in order to teach the call taker to enter narratives into CAD.

What was important? Certainly not choosing to be complacent while a woman fought for her life.

Certainly not emphasizing the importance of remedial training with such irreversible consequences hanging in the balance.

The radio dispatcher has the responsibility to pass along information quickly and clearly, serving as a conduit for critical data between callers in need and responders rushing to help. Returning to our basic training, the Public Safety Telecommunicator 1,

7th Edition course manual, Module Nine reminds us, “in the course of their duties, telecommunicators may become aware of circumstances that could affect response unit safety. Any information that may be relevant to response units must be captured and relayed. Information that should be relayed includes, but is not limited to, weapons, violent actions, hazardous conditions, severe weather, etc.”

“Buckle their belts” and “fasten their vests” by remaining diligent with your basic and continuing education, prepared to share relevant information as soon as you obtain it.

- One Midwest U.S. telecommunicator learned another hard lesson in complacency in December 2010 when she neglected to send back-up for more than 15 minutes after an officer stopped answering her radio once she arrived on the scene of a domestic violence call. According to reports, once the telecommunicator did start back-up, she neglected to advise responding units that a child caller on scene reported an officer was shot.

The communications center manager later said the dispatcher, “to her own admission, said she did not believe the caller.” The telecommunicator reportedly told internal affairs investigators, “I believe my mindset was, ‘This is a girl. She probably doesn’t know what she’s talking about (...)’ sometimes citizens report things that are not correct or they saw things that didn’t happen.”

Simply put, complacency kills! When we assume the callers are wrong when we assume a mic key is not an officer in trouble rather than attempting to determine if it is, when we neglect to pass relevant information quickly and efficiently, we allow complacency to creep into our performance and run the risk of costing someone their life.

In this situation, an ex-boyfriend killed the officer, his ex-girlfriend and himself before back-up arrived, leaving the victim’s 11-year old daughter behind to witness the tragedy and call for help from a neighbor’s phone.

The PST1 manual continues, “The telecommunicator can enhance response unit safety by being aware and prepared for unexpected radio transmissions from any response unit, at any time. Response units may come across incidents in progress...In the life or death situations experienced by today’s response units, there may only be one chance to call for assistance. It is the telecommunicator’s responsibility to hear that call and react!”

Along with responding to calls for service and checking unit status, the radio dispatcher has the responsibility to clear the air on calls where there is a high potential risk to officers, such as domestic incidents, foot or vehicle pursuits, any call with the presence of weapons, any in-progress incident, calls involving persons with a mental illness or suspected terrorist incidents.

Clearing the air fights complacency and fastens the vest of the responder by allowing the first responding units on the scene the opportunity to call for back-up or advise quick tactical adjustments to others en route or on the scene in the event of a rapidly changing incident scene.

Additionally, echoing relevant information broadcast from the scene is another proactive step radio dispatcher can take to ensure all units en route or in the area clearly receive relevant information broadcast by the unit on scene.

Using the ABCs of radio communications techniques (accuracy, brevity and clarity), radio dispatchers can ensure “what’s important now” is relayed to the officers, in a quick, clear, accurate message intended to give them and those around them a clear picture of the incident scene so appropriate tactical decisions can be made when controlling an unfolding incident.

Martini, Stephen. The Telecommunicator’s Role in Officer Safety. APCOIntl.org CDE#44540
<https://www.apcointl.org/doc/training-certification-1/cde/704-cde-44540-officer-safety/file.html>

4.3.4 **Learning Objective:** Identify types of calls requiring crisis call taking strategies.

- Mental Health- behavioral, emotional, or psychiatric. De-escalation techniques that may help resolve a crisis:
 - Keep your voice calm
 - Avoid overreacting
 - Listen to the person
 - Don’t argue or try to reason with the person
 - Express support and concern
 - Ask how you can help
 - Offer options instead of trying to take control
 - Be patient
 - Gently announce actions before initiating them
 - Give the person space

National Alliance on Mental Illness. Mental Health Crisis Planning, Page 6. Retrieved May 10, 2018. <http://www.namihelps.org/Crisis-Booklet-Adults.pdf>

- Suicidal Callers - When dealing with suicidal callers, it is recommended that if you have any doubt about what the person may be hinting at, that you ask. It is okay to ask someone if they are thinking about hurting themselves. Almost all the information available today about dealing with suicidal persons says to bring the subject out in the open. You will not “plant the seed” of suicide by asking about it. The term “risk assessment” is used here simply as a tool to allow the call taker to ask more questions for clarification of the problem and to provide that information to responders or mental health workers. It is a way of gathering information to assist those who respond to help the caller.
- Hysterical Callers/Persistent Repetition - It is rare that a caller is truly hysterical. In most cases, a skilled call taker can get through to a caller enough to have them provide information. However, there are times when callers cannot calm themselves enough to answer questions. In these circumstances, the call taker must take immediate control of the call. The call taker’s tone of voice must remain calm, firm, and well-modulated. The call taker must understand that most hysterical callers can be dealt with if the proper

techniques are used. This will allow the call taker to obtain the necessary information, even if extensive details cannot be obtained.

Hysteria is a type of regression. The call taker must not respond using hysteria or elevated voice levels, threatening commands, etc. Respond with the idea that the primary focus is to obtain information and assist the caller with their emergency. Rules of Persistence:

- A firm, calm, authoritative well-modulated voice
- State a simple question phrase or command
- Repeat this question, phrase or command
- Exactly the same way each time until a response is received
- Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired - Many of the same principles apply to the hearing and/or speech impaired caller as with any other call. Often, asking the caller to please repeat their information will be a good course of action. Usually, a person with a speech or hearing impairment will take direction from you on the best way to get information from them (repeat, spell, etc.). Do not raise your voice to a hearing impaired caller-this only distorts your voice; it does not help them hear. As with other callers, hearing, and speech impaired persons have valuable information to offer. They must be treated with courtesy and professionalism while processing their call efficiently. Tips for hearing or speech impaired callers:
 - DO use your normal tone of voice
 - DO take your cues from them (to speak louder or deeper)
 - DO keep questioning simple
 - DO be patient
 - DO NOT yell at a hearing-impaired caller
- Non-English-Speaking Callers - Taking a call from a person that speaks little or no English can be challenging. Often, the caller will understand and speak some English. In these cases, you can try to speak to the caller slowly and clearly and ask that they do the same. In some cases, this method may be enough to obtain basic call information, although the caller will probably not be able to provide detailed answers to your questions in English. Tips:
 - Process calls from non-English speakers in an efficient, courteous manner.
 - Speak clearly and slowly
 - DO NOT speak louder in an effort to be understood

Call Processing. Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, Telecommunicator Program Office; Telecommunicator I – Basic Call Taker Page 87-95, Student Resource Guide 2011. <https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/images/training/T1-%20Combined%202011%20Student%20Resource%20Guide%20010914.pdf>

4.3.5 Learning Objective: Explain some considerations for dealing with calls involving children and the elderly.

- Elderly Callers - Call takers will take many calls from elderly callers. Dealing with an older person does not necessarily mean there will be problems taking the call, but you may be faced with the need to use different methods of communication with them.

Elderly callers are often hesitant about accessing emergency services. This means there may be a time lapse because they have spent time thinking about whether or not to call. An elderly caller may be very apologetic about calling. They may be unsure they did the right thing.

- Some techniques for dealing with the elderly caller:
 - Speak to them in a professional courteous manner
 - Reassure them they did the right thing by calling
 - Remember that some elderly people may have speech or hearing impairment from medical problems or age
 - Address elderly people as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. rather than by their first name
 - DO NOT continue to ask an elderly female her name if she has given her name as Mrs. Her-husband's-name unless it is necessary
 - DO NOT shout or be abrupt with elderly callers
- Child Callers - Much of the information you receive from a child caller will depend on their age and communication skill. One of the most important communication methods you can use with a child caller is to ask questions in a way they can understand and if they don't understand, ask it in a different way. Be patient while they are telling you "their story". Attempt to find out if they are alone or if an adult is present. You may want to ask to speak to the adult. In some cases, the child will give information that is more detailed. If they cannot provide the address, use some of the previously outlined techniques to help them find it (mail, the name of people who live in the house they are at, etc.). You may have to have the line traced or depend on ANI/ALI information. You can also ask what playground they are near or what schools they go to, what friends live nearby. All of these are clues to where they are.
- Tips for child callers:
 - Ask for, and call them by name
 - Give them your name if you think it will build rapport
 - Reassure them that you will help them
 - Talk in a simple manner, yet do not be condescending
 - Listen carefully

Call Processing. Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, Telecommunicator Program Office; Telecommunicator I – Basic Call Taker Page 95-96, Student Resource Guide 2011. <https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/images/training/T1-%20Combined%202011%20Student%20Resource%20Guide%20010914.pdf>

4.3.6 Learning Objective: List special call handling techniques for angry or difficult callers.

- Angry, Hostile or Abusive Callers - When handling a call from an angry, hostile or abusive caller, the call taker must first remain professional. Although it may be unpleasant to stay on the telephone with such a caller, it does not remove the responsibility the call taker has to obtain information and provide needed assistance. Also understand, it isn't personal, even if the caller tries to make it sound that way. Tips:
 - Maintain a calm, professional voice tone
 - Consider the use of silence until the caller calms down or is able to speak rationally

- Remember the primary focus is to obtain information and provide assistance
- Use the “persistent repetition” technique as appropriate with a respectful and polite tone of voice
- Remember that angry, hostile or abusive callers are entitled to courteous, professional service, just as any other caller
- DO NOT become angry and hostile in response to the caller
- DO NOT threaten the caller by saying you will not help them if they do not stop being abusive

Call Processing. Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, Telecommunicator Program Office; Telecommunicator I – Basic Call Taker Page 94, Student Resource Guide 2011.

<https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/images/training/T1-%20Combined%202011%20Student%20Resource%20Guide%20010914.pdf>

4.3.7 **Learning Objective:** Explain how to defuse a difficult and/or crisis call for service.

- Be empathic and non-judgmental - When someone says or does something you perceive as weird or irrational, try not to judge or discount their feelings. Whether or not you think those feelings are justified, they’re real to the other person. Pay attention to them.
- Use non-threatening nonverbal - The more a person loses control, the less they hear your words—and the more they react to your nonverbal communication. Be mindful of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice.
- Avoid overacting - Remain calm, rational, and professional. While you can’t control the person’s behavior, how you respond to their behavior will have a direct effect on whether the situation escalates or defuses.
- Focus on feelings - Facts are important, but how a person feels is the heart of the matter. Yet some people have trouble identifying how they feel about what’s happening to them. Watch and listen carefully for the person’s real message.
- Ignore challenging questions - Answering challenging questions often results in a power struggle. When a person challenges your authority, redirect their attention to the issue at hand.
- Set Limits - If a person’s behavior is belligerent, defensive, or disruptive, give them clear, simple, and enforceable limits. Offer concise and respectful choices and consequences.
- Choose wisely what you insist upon - It’s important to be thoughtful in deciding which rules are negotiable and which are not. For example, If a person refuses to tell you their relation (sister, aunt, cousin) to others involved in the disturbance, at least get the description of the person. Allow silence for reflection - we’ve all experienced awkward silences. While it may seem counterintuitive to let moments of silence occur, sometimes it’s the best choice. It can give a person a chance to reflect on what’s happening, and how he or she needs to proceed.
- Allow time for decisions - When a person is upset, they may not be able to think clearly. Give them a few moments to think through what you’ve said.

CPI’s Top 10 De-Escalation Tips.

<https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/CPI-s-Top-10-De-Escalation-Tips-Revisited>

Unit 4 Basic Call Processing Techniques Resources

- *Active Listening is Key/Listen first, talk second.* <http://www.jackrosenfeld.com/Active-Listening.pdf>
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Glossary/Acronyms

Communication Cycle - The communication cycle is the process by which a message is sent by one individual, and it passes through a chain of recipients.

Context – The parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning.

Feedback - The transmission of evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process to the original or controlling source.

Sender - to dispatch by a means of communication.

Medium - Also called the channel, the medium is the means by which a message is transmitted.

Message - A communication in writing, in speech, or by signals.

Noise – An unwanted signal or a disturbance.

Receiver - To come into possession of.