

New York State Sheriff's Association
PSAP Accreditation Program
Chemung County Communications Center

PSAP Accreditation Assessor's Report

To: The New York State Sheriff's Association PSAP Committee

From: Assessors: Chief Communications Officer, Stephen DeChick
Ontario County Sheriff's Office

Accreditation Manager, Carole Cunningham
Wyoming County Sheriff's Office

Dispatcher II, Charles Vitale
Monroe County Emergency Communications Department

Date: January 21, 2022

Subject: Accreditation Assessment of the Chemung County Communications Center
(PSAP)

Synopsis

On January 19th, 20th and 21st, 2022, a first-time accreditation assessment was conducted for the Chemung County Communications Center (PSAP). The assessment team consisted of Chief Communications Officer Stephen DeChick of the Ontario County Sheriff's Office, Accreditation Manager Carole Cunningham, Wyoming County Sheriff's Office and Dispatcher II Charles Vitale of the Monroe County Emergency Communications Department. This was Charles' first assessment as he is a newly appointed PSAP assessor for the NYSSA.

The Chemung County Communications Center is located in Elmira's City Hall. The county seat is the City of Elmira. The population of the county (2020 census) is 84,148. 911 operations began (first 9-1-1 call received) in Chemung County in 1994.

The Chemung County Communications Center is responsible for answering 911 calls and all types of administrative calls for service in Chemung County and for dispatching appropriate police, fire and ambulance services units. The communications center is directly responsible for dispatching nineteen volunteer fire departments and one full time fire department (City of Elmira). There are four ALS level ambulance services in the county that the PSAP takes 911 calls for. Additionally, there are six full time police departments in the county including the Chemung County Sheriff's Office and the New York State Police. The City of Elmira's police force has the largest number of sworn officers in the county.

The communications center is currently staffed by nineteen full time dispatchers and one part time dispatcher. There are currently two full time vacancies that the center is actively trying to fill. In 2021, PSAP answered 46,571 911 calls and 150,136 non-emergency phone calls. They handled 97,235 law enforcement and 9,442 fire and EMS incidents. In 2020, the PSAP started using the RapidSOS portal to enhance their ability in locating 911 callers.

The PSAP was for many years under the operational control of the Emergency Management Office. In late 2019, the Chemung County Communication Center became its own department of the county, but remained under the umbrella of Emergency Management. The Director of 911 is a department head of the county and reports directly to the County Executive's Office and not under the supervision of the Director of Emergency Management.

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The assessment team verified the agency was in compliance with all but two accreditation standards. Those two standards will require a waiver by the NYSSA. Tom Mitchell was contacted by the assessors and briefed. He preliminarily agreed with the assessor's recommendations that waivers should be granted. Overall, the Chemung County 911 Communication Center has done an excellent job in its efforts to comply with the program standards. The Accreditation Manager / Director has done an excellent job updating policies and procedures that were reportedly very out of date when he took over. This assessment team unanimously recommends that the agency be favorably considered for accreditation at this time.

Agency Assessed: Chemung County (911) Communication Center
317 E Church St
Elmira, NY 14902

Chief Executive Officer: Director Doug Houper

Dates of Assessment: January 19-21, 2022

Contact Information for Assessors:

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Assessment Logistics

On January 19th the assessment team met with 911 Director Doug Houser and Administrative Assistant Penny Arnold on January 19, 2022 to discuss the purpose and structure of the on-site visit. The Assessment team was introduced to the PSAP Command staff and Communications Operators and briefed on the agency operations. Team members were given a comprehensive tour of the entire agency. The team was provided with adequate facilities to conduct their assessment. The 911 Director and Administrative Assistant were always available to answer questions and provide additional information as needed. The 911 Director was available to escort assessors to various locations within and outside the agency if needed.

The 911 Director was given a summary of the assessment team's activity following the first day on-site. The team shared their findings with 911 Director Doug Houser and Administrative Assistant Penny Arnold during an exit interview before leaving on January 21, 2022.

Assessment Procedures

The assessment team followed the strategy described below to verify compliance with program standards.

1. A team member would review a standard file to make an initial determination of whether the agency had complied with the applicable standard.
2. If the assessor determined that the policies, procedures and documentation were in order, the assessor would approve the file folder and complete the Compliance Verification Report.
3. If the assessor did not believe the file supported a determination of compliance, a second assessor would review the file.
4. If the assessors' concerns were resolved either through discussion among the assessors or through consultation with the program manager, the team leader would complete the Compliance Verification Report.
5. If the concerns could not be resolved, the agency would be advised of the corrective action needed and given the opportunity to amend the file.
6. The assessor who reviewed the file handled interviews and other activities designed to supplement the documentation contained in the files.
7. If a waiver was found to be needed during the assessment process the assessors emailed the request to Tom Mitchell at the NYSSA for preliminary approval.

Verification Activities

Methods of verification included observation of the agency facilities, review of agency files, interviews with agency personnel, visits to work areas, observations of personnel and equipment, and chance meetings of agency members.

To verify compliance with the standards, assessors conducted interviews with members of the Chemung County Communications Center.

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The following agency personnel were interviewed during the on-site assessment:

911 Director Doug Houper
Senior Communication Operator David Sullivan
Senior Communication Operator Justin Grose
Communication Operator Karla Casler
Communication Operator Brad Jacobus
Communication Operator Randi Baldwin
Communication Operator Brittney Huffner
Communication Operator Brian Andrew
Administrative Assistant Penny Arnold

During initial review of agency files, the assessment team verified compliance with sixty (60) standards. Fifteen (15) files required additional documentation, follow-up interviews or modification of documentation to verify compliance.

The following standards required additional documentation or discussion:

General: It was noted during the assessment that some of the policies provided did not have an effective date. All requested policies were provided and reviewed. During that review it was noted that some of the provided policies had different references numbers/letters than originally provided. The Director indicated that the policy categorization changed to assist with categorizing the policies based on the NYSSA standards.

SPECIFIC STANDARDS

- **5.2 Selection Process** – Requested and received Civil Service Exam Notice for 2021
- **7.1 Conduct and Appearance** – Requested and received general order regarding social media.
- **9.1 Grievance** – Requested and received a copy of the grievance form.
- **11.1 Internal Affairs** - Requested copy of agency's internal affairs policy.
- **13.1 Community Relations** – Requested and received updated policy identifying who is responsible for community related function and that all personnel in the PSAP are responsible for community relations.
- **14.1 Basic Training** – Requested and received copies of APCO PST-1 course certificates. Also requested Jason Mitchells hire date.
- **14.4 Continuing Education Training** – Requested and received a detailed explanation of the training category "CDE".
- **14.5 Certified Instructors** - Requested and received copies of APCO CCS course certificates.
- **14.7 Training Records** – Requested and received a copy of Bradley Jacobus's promotion date to SCO (Senior Communications Operator).
- **28.1 PSAP Staffing** – Requested and received list of current staffing, copy of agency's organization chart and information regarding the authorized number of personnel in the PSAP.
- **31.1 Silent/hang-up/misdirected/misrouted calls** - Requested and received updated policy to include handling of all categories of types of calls identified in the standard not just hang-up 911 ones.
- **35.1 EMD** - Requested and received updated policy to include procedure for temporary suspension of EMD protocols.
- **36.1 Closest Car Concept** - Requested and received 2004 copy of the intermunicipal MOU
- **37.1 Resources** - Requested and received updated policy to include emergency contact numbers for services supported by the PSAP.
- **38.1 PSAP Emergencies** - Requested and received updated policy to include emergency procedures to be followed for natural disasters and terrorism threats.

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Accreditation Standards

Title	Description	Status
STANDARD 1.1	Mission Statement	In Compliance
STANDARD 1.2	Goals & Objectives	In Compliance
STANDARD 1.1	Mission Statement	In Compliance
STANDARD 1.2	Goals and Objectives	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.1	Organizational Charts	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.2	Statement of Duties	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.3	Promulgation of Policies	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.5	Chain of Command	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.7	Lawful Orders	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.8	Fiscal Management	In Compliance
STANDARD 2.9	Budget Reports	In Compliance
STANDARD 3.1	Procurement of Property	In Compliance
STANDARD 4.1	Records Management System	In Compliance
STANDARD 4.3	Administrative Reporting	In Compliance
STANDARD 4.4	Records Retention	In Compliance
STANDARD 5.1	Job Announcements	In Compliance
STANDARD 5.2	Selection Process	In Compliance
STANDARD 5.3	Written Tests	In Compliance
STANDARD 6.2	Physical Exams	In Compliance
STANDARD 6.3	Psychological Exams	Not in Compliance
STANDARD 6.4	Background Investigations	In Compliance
STANDARD 6.5	Interviews	In Compliance
STANDARD 6.6	Past Employee Records	In Compliance
STANDARD 6.7	Probationary Evaluations	In Compliance
STANDARD 6.8	Annual Performance Evaluations	Not in Compliance
STANDARD 7.1	Conduct and Appearance	In Compliance
STANDARD 7.2	Disciplinary System	In Compliance
STANDARD 7.3	Sexual Harassment	In Compliance
STANDARD 8.1	Promotion Process	In Compliance
STANDARD 9.1	Grievance Procedures	In Compliance
STANDARD 10.1	Employee Recognition	In Compliance
STANDARD 11.1	Internal Affairs	In Compliance
STANDARD 12.1	News Releases	In Compliance
STANDARD 13.1	Responsibility for Public/Community Relations	In Compliance
STANDARD 14.1	Basic Training	In Compliance

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STANDARD 14.2	Training Programs	In Compliance
STANDARD 14.3	Emergency Medical Dispatch Program	In Compliance
STANDARD 14.4	Minimum Annual Training	In Compliance
STANDARD 14.5	Certified Instructors	In Compliance
STANDARD 14.6	Specialized Positions	In Compliance
STANDARD 14.7	Supervision Credentials	In Compliance
STANDARD 15.1	Training Records	In Compliance
STANDARD 16.1	Electric Power	In Compliance
STANDARD 16.2	Master Time Source	In Compliance
STANDARD 17.1	CAD System	In Compliance
STANDARD 18.1	Direct Dispatch	In Compliance
STANDARD 19.1	Enhanced 911, ANI, ALI	In Compliance
STANDARD 20.1	TDD Calls	In Compliance
STANDARD 21.1	Integrated Justice Portal	In Compliance
STANDARD 22.1	Recordings	In Compliance
STANDARD 23.1	Redundant System	In Compliance
STANDARD 24.1	Paper Backup	In Compliance
STANDARD 26.1	Building Security	In Compliance
STANDARD 28.1	Minimum Staffing	In Compliance
STANDARD 30.1	Foreign Language Interpretation	In Compliance
STANDARD 31.1	Hang-up 911 Calls/Misdirected Calls	In Compliance
STANDARD 32.1	Crimes in Progress	In Compliance
STANDARD 33.1	Alarms	In Compliance
STANDARD 34.1	Dispatch Procedures	In Compliance
STANDARD 35.1	Emergency Medical Dispatching	In Compliance
STANDARD 36.1	Closest Car Concept	In Compliance
STANDARD 37.1	Miscellaneous Resources	In Compliance
STANDARD 38.1	PSAP Emergencies	In Compliance

Standard Compliance

The assessment team approved agency procedures for 58 of 60 standards. The Chemung County Communication Center was in compliance with New York State Sheriff's Association PSAP Accreditation Program Standards before the end of the assessment pursuant to waivers.

Recommendations

We respectfully suggest the agency review the below recommendations for possible implementation before the next accreditation review:

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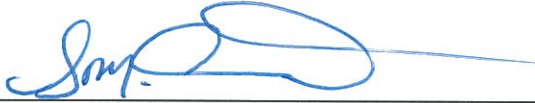
- We recommend redacting SSN and other private information (including employees names) prior to putting paperwork in the files (multiple standards).
- We recommend defining acronyms and abbreviations in each individual policy.
- We recommend adding in a matrix defining the precise standard evaluation guidelines that the communication training officers use to evaluate trainees.
- We recommend adding in the phrase "NHTSA approved" in front of your EMD program (standard 14.3)
- We recommend implementing a redundancy source to communicate with ambulance agencies if the CAD / phone systems were to fail as these could be seen as single points of failure.

Overall Assessment

The Chemung County Communication Center has done an excellent job in its efforts to implement program standards. Documentation demonstrates that all applicable standards have been implemented and maintained. Agency personnel were knowledgeable, cordial, cooperative, and represented the 911 Center very well during the visit. All personnel were very professional in their approach to the reassessment.

After careful consideration, the assessment team unanimously recommends that the Chemung County Communication Center be favorably considered for accreditation pursuant to waivers.

The assessment team has reviewed the contents of this report and we concur with the findings and recommendations.



Stephen DeChick



Carole Cunningham



Charles Vitale

January 21, 2022