

1) What requirements/protocols must 911 dispatchers follow, and how are they documented?

- **Standards & SOPs:** Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) use national standards (e.g., **NENA-STA-020.1-2020** and **APCO 1.113.2-2024**) and then localize them into written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These cover call flow, special case handling, and documentation. ([Ymaws](#))
- **Answer-time benchmarks:** 90% of 9-1-1 calls were answered within 15 seconds; 95% were within 20 seconds (NENA). APCO also sets answer-time metrics (e.g., within 20 seconds for 90% of calls and within 10 seconds for 75% of calls). ([Ymaws](#), [APCO International](#))
- **Minimum information to capture:** At minimum: location, caller identity, callback number, and nature of emergency; provide language-line support; transfer misrouted calls to the proper PSAP. ([Ymaws](#))
- **Medical calls:** Follow Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocols and have structured questions and pre-arrival instructions—dispatch when location and incident information are established.
- **Documentation:** The Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) documents calls in CAD/RMS (Computer-Aided Dispatch/Records Management System) as part of incident handling. ([APCO International](#))

2) What challenges affect the accurate transcription/processing of 911 calls?

- **Call environment & inputs:** Multiple simultaneous calls, poor cellular reception, non-emergency traffic mixed in, rural response factors; these increase processing time and error risk. ([APCO International](#))
- **Language & accessibility:** Incidents requiring translation or TTY/TDD (telecom equipment for individuals with disabilities) support extend processing and complicate accurate capture. ([APCO International](#))
- **Location/identity gaps:** Missing ALI/ANI (automatic location/number identification) or incomplete location data require manual verification (reverse lookups, service-provider contacts). ([Ymaws](#))

- **Workflow & tech fragmentation:** CAD interoperability and data sharing across systems/agencies remain national challenges; inconsistent/inaccurate data flow. ([911.gov](https://www.911.gov/))
- **High cognitive load:** Standards explicitly recognize factors that slow/impact call processing and require management to monitor and mitigate them (workflow design, metrics, training). ([APCO International](https://www.apcointernational.org/))

3) Who are the key stakeholders and how do they interact with the system?

- **Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs):** Primary users; receive/process 911 inputs, document incidents in CAD, and dispatch/update field units. ([APCO International](https://www.apcointernational.org/))
- **Field responders (Police/Fire/EMS):** Consume CAD/radio updates (location, hazards, patient status), acknowledge status changes, request checks, and rely on dispatcher updates.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Oversee operations, performance metrics, QA reviews, training, and policy; maintain workflows and benchmark compliance. ([APCO International](https://www.apcointernational.org/))
- **IT/Systems/Admin:** Maintain CAD, recording, and network systems; support secure storage and data exchange. ([Bureau of Justice Assistance](https://www.bureauofjusticeassistance.gov/))
- **External stakeholders:** Courts/public records officers (records access with redaction/limits), mutual-aid agencies (inter-PSAP transfers), and the public. ([Ymaws, Reporters Committee](https://www.ymaws.org/reporterscommittee/))

4) What security, privacy, and confidentiality concerns apply to 911 data?

- **Public records vs. privacy:** 911 audio/transcripts are often public records; however, many states require redaction of caller names, addresses, phone numbers, and sensitive medical information. Some restrict the release of audio or favor transcripts. ([Reporters Committee](https://www.reporterscommittee.org/))
- **Example statute (NC):** Contents of 911 calls are public except identifiers (voice/name/address/phone); agencies aren't required to retain recordings beyond 30 days unless ordered. ([North Carolina General Assembly](https://www.ncleg.gov/DocumentViewer.aspx?docId=3462447))
- **Access control & security:** Centers must: control access to recordings/CAD data, ensure audibility/encryption, and align with criminal-justice security expectations when

applicable (CJIS). ([APCO International](#), [Ymaws](#))

- **Medical data handling:** EMD protocols generate patient condition details; agencies must store and share such data only for operational purposes and in accordance with applicable medical/confidentiality laws.

5) What information is critical during a call, and how should it be prioritized?

- **1: Location** of the emergency (exact address/intersection/landmarks).
- **2: Callback number** (verify if not auto-provided) and nature to select response type/priority.
- **3: Safety/medical checks:**
 - Medical—are they conscious? are they breathing?;
 - Police/fire—presence of weapons/hazards, number of people involved, entrapment, etc.
- **4: Dispatch** as soon as the location and incident info are determined
 - Continue structured questions and pre-arrival instructions while units are en route;
 - Continuously update CAD for responders.
- **Minimum:** Ensure location, caller identity, callback, and nature of emergency are captured. ([Ymaws](#))

Sources

- **NENA-STA-020.1-2020: NENA Standard for 9-1-1 Call Processing.** (SOP basis; answer-time benchmarks; required call-taking elements; special cases) ([Ymaws](#))
- **APCO ANS 1.113.2-2024: Public Safety Communications Incident Handling Process.** (Metrics, workflows, PST documentation obligations, factors affecting processing) ([APCO International](#))
- **BJA: Law Enforcement CAD Systems.** (Stakeholders and CAD core functions) ([Bureau of Justice Assistance](#))
- **911.gov: CAD Interoperability Project.** (Nationwide interoperability/data-sharing challenges) ([911.gov](#))
- **RCFP Open Government Guide—911 tapes.** (State-by-state privacy/public records rules & redactions) ([Reporters Committee](#))
- **North Carolina Public Records Statute (excerpt).** (Public content of 911 calls with identifier redactions; 30-day retention minimum example) ([North Carolina General Assembly](#))