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How exactly does dispatch work

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studentcj
Forum Member

Join Date: Oct 2003

How exactly does dispatch work

#1

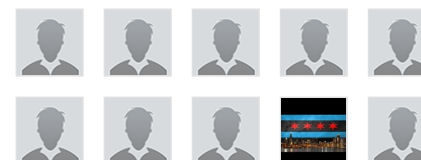
01-08-2004, 01:06 AM

I was wondering how exactly does dispatch work. Does the dispatcher only call out to those that he/she knows is in the area of the crime or do the dispatch to everybody and then whoever wants to respond to that call does. Also, I know is tv, but when watching cops it seems sometimes four or five patrol cars will respond to something that seems simple enough for just the car that responds first and then the one backup.

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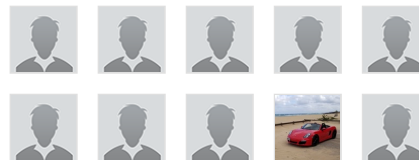
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**Jeremy_**

In your Rearview

01-08-2004, 01:35 AM

#2

The call will come into dispatch, the dispatcher will check her computer and see if a car has just went 10-8(in service) or gave a 10-20(location) close to that location. If there is not one, she will ask the cars their location.

Regards to the cops tv question, simply because the camera is there 😊

Join Date: Oct 2002
 Posts: 114

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Jeremy
 SCSD

You dont have to like us, or like what we do, but when you need us, we will help you to the best of our abilites. Its just part of it.

www.scottcosheriff.com



OregonDirtbiker
 USCG

01-08-2004, 01:39 AM

#3

From what I've experienced, radio dispatches the first person on shift, so for example Officer Joe is first person on the shift, Officer John is the 2nd, and Officer Jack is the 3rd. Someone calls the crime line for the department, or whatever number you call to report a crime. Radio dispatches the first officer on the shift, this would be Officer joe. Ussualy depending on the type of call, and if the other officers are busy on a different call. This affects the number of officers that will respond to the call. I'm sure this differs from department to department. Hope this helps a little.

Join Date: Nov 2003
 Posts: 182

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â€œThe Blue Book says we've got to go out and it doesn't say a damn thing about having to come back.â€

-Captain Patrick Etheridge, U.S Life Saving Service

**sflicop**

Getting paid to play!

Join Date: Sep 2003
Posts: 1485

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01-08-2004, 02:00 PM

#4

We have a CAD (Computer Assisted Dispatch) system. When a call comes in, it is typed in by the call taker. It then goes over the comp to whoever is dispatching main chanel. She can see all available units. The computer will tell her what zone the call is in, and give her a list in order from zone unit, etc... of who to dispatch as primary and as backup.

In law enforcement, the customer is ALWAYS wrong.

In God we trust. Everyone else is run through NCIC.

Sometimes there is justice. Sometimes there is just us.

I'd rather be tried by 12 then carried by 6.

The opinions given in my posts do not necessarily reflect the opinions, views, policies, and/or procedures of my employing agency. They are my personal opinions only.

**Gunky**

Forum Member

01-08-2004, 02:23 PM

#5

We're assigned patrol zones. If something is being dispatched in one Deputy's zone, he handles it. If he's tied up, it will either be held or will go to another unit. If it's priority, it will be dispatched to someone else and if yet another unit is closer, he'll head there, too.

As far as the Cops thing, yeah, because the camera is there. There are also times

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where it seems like a small deal but more units are needed because of a BOLO, perimeter, assist with searching, etc. Or, of course, out of sheer boredom.



sardonnica
Kid

01-08-2004, 08:43 PM

#6

I think boredom is more accurate as to why all the cars come.....when I got pulled over on saturday the entire midnight shift (5 cars) came over to see what was going on. It was not because they needed to, its just I pulled over on a main street in a big parking lot so they all decided to satisfy their curiosity. (and secure my sheer embarrassment since I am well acquainted with the officers on that shift)

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Posts: 54

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~*~*~Sara Maria~*~*~



squad51
STORM THE
CASTLE!

01-08-2004, 09:16 PM

#7

dipatch works.....poorly.....they keep interupping a.meal time, b.nap time, c. tv time d. hanging out at the beach time, e.did I mention nap time? Then there are those nights when trhe dispatcher just keeps sending those calls and then more calls after that and then there are calls pendingits just never stops! I truely beleive that people do not actually call the police..dispatchers just make up calls and send you to an address just to torment us poor cops. I mean come on like dispaatching is hard...all they do is watch tv and play on the internet and then they get mad when we ask for a plate or a name to be run like we interrumped their nap time oh thats a cardinal rule don't interrump dispatches nap time if youi thought the calls where bad before omg they just get worse, more paper work and the smellier they are the mroe the dispatchers like it. Yes those dispatchers are truely evil people...the bain of us hard working cops.

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ok in real life...good dispatchers are worth their weight in gold and platium they can make or break a case. They can make your night a living hell or the night may go

very smoothly even as all hell breaks loose. As far as how it works..generally with the E911 system a callers location and some information will come up on the screen as they answer the call. This information may include but not limited too..hazardous materials on site, past calls for service, alerts for law enforcement on that address. The call taker answer the phone and the needs to decide the appropriate resources to send to the call ie PD,FD,EMS, as for fire and EMS they dispatch the closest stations, ambulances to the call. As for the police it depends on how the department is setup, they could have sector cars, 911 call only cars, or just the closest or the unit that is available to respond to the call. Enhanced 991, MDTs/MCTS, CAD and other technology make this easoer and more effienct to get the calls answered.

Happy to be here proud to serve

"Well it appears this lock does not accept american express."

Never trust fire fighters to point out a suspect.



Jmac572
Future MA LEO

01-10-2004, 01:34 PM

#8

The other day, when I was driving outside of my town, I think I saw a cruiser with "CALL 919 INCASE OF EMERGENCY" is this a new number? or was I just seeing things.

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Posts: 18

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Jim D



Stump

01-10-2004, 04:36 PM

#9

Well, I am a dispatcher, so I guess I can give you a heads up.
I think Gunky has the gist of it the best.
The call comes into operator. Operator types in pertinant info, and puts the job in the computer, where it gets routed to the appropriate dispatcher.I don't ask the cars their location before giving out a call. I have about 80 cars on my channel,

LEO lifeline

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and am not wasting the time. I know basically where my cars are when they are not on jobs anyway. That is just from experience, and knowing my guys (they're creatures of habit)The CAD system does recommend cars to go, but the system is flawed - CAD doesn't take into account rivers, etc - the cars it suggests are "as the crow flies", so I barely use that part of CAD. I'll give the job to the car whose beat it is in, and assign a backup from a car in a neighboring beat. Of course, I know which cops are friends and always go on calls together, and I know their quirks, so I am accommodating about who goes to the calls.

If there are more jobs than officers (happens 90% of the time), I prioritize the jobs and give them out as I get cops free.

The biggest difference between TV and real life for dispatching is that on TV, cops are in control... in real life, dispatchers make the decisions who is going where.

Kinda like marriage, huh? LOL The woman behind the man... LOL

Dispatchers aren't mindless drones who just repeat on the air what a citizen says. We have to make MANY split second decisions and keep up with the radio traffic constantly. Multi-tasking is a MUST. Some cops don't realize how much behind-the-scenes work we do. They figure if the radio isn't busy, then I am just sitting there doing nothing (of course, sometimes I am sitting there, bored out of my mind). Investigators ask us to assist in location people, researching jobs, histories, etc, we have notifications to make, requests for service for outside agencies... the list goes on (and I think I have gone on too long).

If you really want something in life you have to work for it. Now quiet, they're about to announce the lottery numbers. -- Homer Simpson

**SW4747**

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01-10-2004, 07:16 PM

#10

For the NYPD

When The President's Crime Commission Report was released in early 60's, it served as a blueprint for the Criminal Justice System. The Commission found that there was a direct ratio between speed of response by police and the certainty of apprehension of the suspects in crime. The Commission recommended that the police of large cities establish computer-aided command and control systems and that telephone companies should develop a single police number for large metropolitan areas and eventually for the entire United States. With the release of the Commission's report, Congress enacted crime bills that funded such plans. Large cities like New York eagerly sought and received the necessary financial assistance to implement those recommendations. Millions of tax dollars funded the design and implementation of the computerized system given the technical name of Special Police Radio Inquiry Network or SPRINT. With the assistance of the phone companies, a single phone number, 911, was selected for emergency calls to the police. It was a number that was easily remembered in an emergency situation. The computerization of calls to the police did improve speed of response by the police and saved many lives over the years.

The 911 operators were assigned to a turret position where they monitored a

computer console. As they received calls, they entered the data into the system and watched the screen on the console. Still maintaining contact with the caller, they determined the nature of the call and routed the data to the division dispatcher for assignment of a sector car. The time between the call made to 911 to the actual arrival at the scene by sector cars was cut to a minimum. Every street and house number in the City of New York could be accessed instantly with cross streets and precinct of occurrence. The designated sector car and status of that car was indicated for the dispatcher. In extreme emergencies like assist police officer, or crimes in progress, the operator could hit a hot button and route those calls to the division dispatcher. Such priority calls jumped to the top of the queue for assignment. Quick responses enabled police officers to effect arrests of suspects in short order. It was common practice for patrol cops to respond to the scene of a robbery or assault and place the victim inside the radio car as they broadcast a quick description of the suspect and searched the vicinity with the eyewitness in their car. Many arrests and convictions were attained by this method. The courts recognized the validity of such police tactics by ruling consistently in favor of the police.

Police officers who were active and effected many arrests knew the court decisions that governed eyewitness identifications. They knew the difference between the various methods that the courts had approved for a valid identification. There were only three valid methods that the police could use. First, the "line-up" in which a suspect was placed with five others of similar physical characteristics; second, "photo array" in which the suspect's photo was placed with five other similar photos; and third, the "show-up" method.

The show-up method was often a crucial factor in the conviction of suspects of violent street crime. Active cops became expert in adopting this tactic. The advantage of the show-up to patrol cops was obvious. If the victim could be placed inside the radio car immediately after the crime, a description of the suspect could be given over the air and a search of the vicinity would often reveal the suspect fleeing from the scene. In New York City, the large crowds of people walking the streets and subways would make a search difficult for police. A victim that was available could pick out the suspect in large crowds. Such recognition by a victim wasn't a show-up, because the police did not control the identification, but merely provided the opportunity for the victim to spot the suspect without police influence. The show-up came into play when another sector car made a stop of a person who matched the description of the suspect. Follow up information about the suspect could be radioed to that patrol car which would enable the officers to detain the suspect. Here the cops earned their pay. The crucial factor in valid show-ups was the "fairness" of the identification. The stop of the suspect was valid under the landmark Terry Decision. The cops could not influence the victim in the show-up. The idea was to have the victim recognize the suspect in a fair manner. The so-called Wade hearings that were conducted to suppress eyewitness identifications were hurdles that arresting officers were confronted with. A sharp defense attorney would require such a hearing in criminal court before the case was presented to the Grand Jury for indictment. Such knowledgeable lawyers knew that they could have charges dismissed in the lower criminal courts by succeeding in a Wade hearing. Suppression of an improperly conducted identification could suppress any subsequent evidence that resulted from it. The doctrine of the "fruit of the poisoned tree" would result in dismissal of the charges. Those same experienced defense attorneys would also obtain the testimony of the arresting officers regarding the sequence of events that led up to the arrest. They

were armed with court testimony that could be used in subsequent court appearances and the actual trial of the defendant. The point of this story is to validate the concept of quick response by the police. Lately, that idea has been challenged. The writer feels that we ignore the experience of the past to our peril. The Kitty Genovese murder back in 1964 illustrated the horrors of a delayed call to the police.

The records and tapes of calls to 911 were of vital importance as evidence in court and in investigations of misconduct by the police. The records also served as an effective supervisory tool. A precinct commander or his ranking officers could ascertain the current status of sector cars in his precinct. Each precinct had a SPRINT terminal console and by typing in a coded command, a supervisor could document the time, location, type of assignment, and disposition of his sector cars. Borough commanders and ranking officers in One Police Plaza could monitor the assignments and status of any of the sector cars in all precincts in the City of New York. For example, the Chief of Patrol in One Police Plaza could sit at a console and enter a "car come-up" and access the status of 9th Precinct sector car Adam. Then, he could enter a "resource message" and see the activity of that sector car for the current tour of duty. If he detected a problem, he could have his aide call the 9th Precinct and question the desk officer. The illustration that I have described is an exaggeration, of course. Such micro-management would be an aberration of the principles of supervision. However, such direct supervision was possible with the computer. In incidents of unusual scope or seriousness, upper management directly supervised on-going incidents by monitoring the calls to 911 and coordinated police activity through the Operations Unit and the Command and Control Center in One Police Plaza.

When the SPRINT system was coming on line, members of the borough communications units were transferred to the new centralized citywide system located in what had been the Line-up Room of the old Headquarters Building in Manhattan. All calls for police service were to be received and handled by the new centralized system. Problems developed quickly. For instance, because all calls were recorded on tape, both the caller and the police operator lost the sense of anonymity and confidentiality that a phone call usually provided. Citizens would often refuse to give their name and call back number. The 911 number had been given such publicity by the city that many calls were made to 911 on a whim or curiosity. The goal was that the police would answer each and every call, so the response times and dispositions of the sector cars were of paramount importance to those in upper management.

In 1973, the statistics for 911 showed that the NYPD Communications Unit had transmitted two-and-one-half million radio runs to police officers on patrol. By the end of the decade of the 70's, the system had broken down. It was commonplace for lieutenants and sergeants to turn out their platoons with computer-printouts of SPRINT listing scores of unanswered calls that Central had been unable to assign. Those backlogs of jobs were doled out to the various sectors at roll call to clear up. Often, due to the lapse of time since the original complaint, the callers were gone on arrival or the situation had ceased to exist. To close out the records with dispositions, many assignments were listed as unfounded or as an unnecessary call. Police officers on patrol often felt a sense of frustration and no sense of accomplishment at the end of their tours of duty. Each radio run generated by a call to 911 resulted in the response by a sector car. Thousands of routine calls were treated as emergencies. The burden on the officers responding to the calls

was overwhelming. I remember being sent on assignments given the designation "investigate a dangerous condition". Upon investigation, the dangerous condition would be a pilot light not working in a water heater or a broken water pipe in a basement. The odor of gas from the pilot light was determined to be an emergency requiring the response of a police car. The proliferation and sale of car alarms and burglar alarms also added to the burden on 911. Initially, the installers of burglar alarms would hook up the alarms so that 911 would be alerted to the burglar alarm and generate a call for the response of a sector car. The amount of unfounded and unnecessary calls of such alarms would astound us today. It was not unusual for a person with such an alarm to actually test the response of the police to their home or place of business. True emergency calls went unanswered or with a delayed response because sector cars were occupied with such trivial calls.

**SW4747**

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01-10-2004, 07:17 PM

#11

Part II

In 1973, the statistics for 911 showed that the NYPD Communications Unit had transmitted two-and-one-half million radio runs to police officers on patrol. By the end of the decade of the 70's, the system had broken down. It was commonplace for lieutenants and sergeants to turn out their platoons with computer-printouts of SPRINT listing scores of unanswered calls that Central had been unable to assign. Those backlogs of jobs were doled out to the various sectors at roll call to clear up. Often, due to the lapse of time since the original complaint, the callers were gone on arrival or the situation had ceased to exist. To close out the records with dispositions, many assignments were listed as unfounded or as an unnecessary call. Police officers on patrol often felt a sense of frustration and no sense of accomplishment at the end of their tours of duty. Each radio run generated by a call to 911 resulted in the response by a sector car. Thousands of routine calls were treated as emergencies. The burden on the officers responding to the calls was overwhelming. I remember being sent on assignments given the designation "investigate a dangerous condition". Upon investigation, the dangerous condition would be a pilot light not working in a water heater or a broken water pipe in a basement. The odor of gas from the pilot light was determined to be an emergency requiring the response of a police car. The proliferation and sale of car alarms and burglar alarms also added to the burden on 911. Initially, the installers of burglar alarms would hook up the alarms so that 911 would be alerted to the burglar alarm and generate a call for the response of a sector car. The amount of unfounded and unnecessary calls of such alarms would astound us today. It was not unusual for a person with such an alarm to actually test the response of the police to their home or place of business. True emergency calls went unanswered or with a delayed response because sector cars were occupied with such trivial calls.

One immediate problem that resulted in the heavy workload placed on the sector cars was that there was little or no time for routine preventive patrol. The sector cars were rarely within the borders of their assigned sectors. This did not go unnoticed by the citizens who were besieged by quality of life problems that resulted. The police officers on patrol in radio motor patrol cars were not there to disperse groups of loiterers, graffiti artists, and other petty acts by otherwise law-

abiding persons. Over a period of time, this led the general feeling of hopelessness on the part of citizens who were victimized by disorderly youths and other petty violators. Disrespect for the police was a natural result when harassed complainants observed radio cars speeding from job to job and ignoring obvious quality of life violations occurring in their sight.

Prior to SPRINT, officers on patrol spent quite a bit of time correcting street conditions on a proactive basis. Officers had the time to engage in preventive patrol. Conditions requiring police attention were routinely corrected by the sector cars without generating a call to police communications. Patrol cars generally remained within their sectors. In fact, when a car responded to an adjoining sector to handle a job, the patrol sergeant would want to know the reason for the assignment. The sergeants on patrol were truly first line supervisors. They spent their time monitoring and supervising the sector cars and foot patrol officers. On rare occasions, the sergeant would respond to a call for service due to the fact that all cars were assigned. You can rest assured that the sector concerned would be held accountable. Another factor that went unrecognized was peer pressure. Angry cops sometimes would confront others who were lax in handling their jobs. At the end of the tour, the locker rooms of precincts would resound with loud shouting and fisticuffs were always a possibility when tempers flared. A good patrol sergeant was worth his weight in gold to active street cops. Proper monitoring of the radio by sergeants would prevent such disputes from occurring.

While awaiting promotion to the rank of sergeant I had the opportunity to observe the 911 system in operation as Police Emergency Operator 305. On January 6, 1973, I was temporarily assigned as a 911 operator before being promoted. This was done at the suggestion of one of the systems analysts in Headquarters. The idea was diabolically clever. Why not take the candidates for promotion and use them for 90 days in the snake-pit atmosphere of 911? Morale was known to be at an all time low. The promotional candidates could be easily pressured to perform at a high level of efficiency. So I spent the next 90 days in misery working the turrets in 911. I saw at firsthand the inefficiencies of the sprawling and overworked system. I recall meeting Officer Paul Cobb who was a dispatcher assigned to the Staten Island radio. I sensed that he was not pleased with the new system, but the stress and high volume of work of the 911 system left us with little time to exchange such views.

I reported to the old NYPD Headquarters at 240 Centre Street in Manhattan. Forty of us were crammed into a small conference room on the second floor. We were directed to report in business attire and were all bright-eyed and full of na



OregonDirtbiker
USCG

01-10-2004, 07:17 PM

#12

Ack..don't your fingers hurt after all that?

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.....
â€œThe Blue Book says we've got to go out and it doesn't say a damn thing about having to come back.â€

-Captain Patrick Etheridge, U.S Life Saving Service
.....



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01-10-2004, 07:18 PM

#13

Part III

There were many other officers who seemed to be totally demoralized by their assignment to 911. It was the worst assignment that I experienced in my career on the NYPD. Turret operators were constantly monitored when they signed into their turret positions. With the exception of the two twenty minute breaks, each turret operator was constantly handling calls. The primary cause of the lack of morale at SPRINT was the volume of traffic that was handled by the overworked system. The continual barrage of calls to 911 demoralized turret operators. When the fifteen- second delay alarm sounded the lieutenants and sergeants could be seen charging out of their offices shouting, "Pick it up!" and pacing behind the turret positions. The fifteen-second delay referred to the period of time that a citizen waited before a 911 operator picked up the call. It was comical to watch these police supervisors charging back and forth behind the rows of cops working to clear the backlog of calls. The feared thirty- second delay was something to experience. Alarms were sounded and a revolving turret light was activated in the supervisor's booth. The same supervisors literally broke out in a sweat when that alarm sounded.

Police from other cities in the United States and from around the world would send representatives to study the new 911 system of New York. As these groups were escorted into the Communications center, their jaws would drop and their eyes would widen in wonder at the complexity of the new system. It wasn't long before similar systems were in operation throughout America.

Each call generated by 911 required the response of a patrol car manned by two police officers. The high cost of maintaining this system would require Federal funds. Crime, then as now, has always been a hot political issue. Most political figures wanted to be pictured as tough on crime. Congress passed bills to fight the lawlessness that seemed to be out of control. Police administrations throughout America vied with each other in creating newer and more imaginative uses for those tax dollars. More and more programs were submitted to the Justice

Department for funding.

In small town police agencies, it was common practice to have one-officer patrol cars. In the large cities such as New York, two-officer patrol cars were the norm. Pressure mounted to have the NYPD institute one-officer patrol cars to cope with the staggering numbers of calls to 911. That was made a negotiating factor in labor negotiations with the City of New York and the Patrolman's Benevolent Association (PBA) in contract talks. I remember seeing the front page of the "Staten Island Advance" with a photo of rows of new patrol cars assigned to the 120th Precinct. High-crime precincts would continue to maintain two-officer patrol cars, but many of the precincts would have one officer on radio motor patrol. The issue of one-officer versus two-officer cars remains a thorny issue in police labor negotiations in New York City.

When crack cocaine hit the streets in 1985, the system came under renewed pressure. The drug epidemic caused many homicides. Drive-by shootings were commonplace. Children playing on the sidewalks were victims of the drug gangs killing each other for their turf. Drug dealers loitering on street corners smirked as police cars raced to radio runs with lights and sirens. The police were ineffective in dealing with the daily problems that the harried citizens of New York were forced to live with. Something had to give. Somebody had to notice the problems with the 911 system.

With the much-heralded article in "The Atlantic Monthly" by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling entitled "Broken Windows"; many in police management rediscovered the wheel. How could the police hope to retake the streets when they were slaves to a computer called SPRINT? It didn't take long for others to join Wilson and Kelling and call for change. The book "Beyond 911, A New Era for Policing" by Malcolm K. Sparrow, Mark H. Moore, and David M. Kennedy was published in 1990. Along with calls for implementation of creative thinking in policing, the book examined the 911 system and revealed its shortcomings. If nothing else were done to change policing in the recent past, the liberation of the police to engage in proactive preventive patrol would still have had a great impact on quality of life in our City.

As a result, the police in New York City have achieved results beyond the wildest dreams of social scientists. The NYPD must be recognized for the quality of life that we all enjoy today. The cultural institutions of the City are flourishing as throngs of tourists visit a safe and attractive City. The hotels, restaurants, and shops are filled to capacity with citizens who are once again proud to call themselves "New Yorkers". No longer are thousands fleeing to the "safety" of the Sunbelt. When the FBI Uniform Crime Reports are published, States that were relatively crime-free in the past are now beset by increasing crime as their populations rise. New York is looking good. What happened? How did New York work the miracle? Police from other cities and even Europe visit New York to study the tactics and policies that have been put into practice here.

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01-10-2004, 07:19 PM

#14

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Part IV

Advances in technology are some of the reasons. The new Enhanced 911 Public Safety Answering System (E911 PSAC) system has the capability of identifying both the caller's number and location. The caller's phone number is automatically displayed on the console at the 911 operator's position. This new technology has stopped many of the bogus or crank calls. For decades, the NYPD had pleaded with the public to refrain from abusing the 911 number, with little effect. The prosecution of abusers of the police communications system was not made a priority by the NYPD until recently. Those who make false calls to 911 now are to be treated in the same manner as a false alarm of fire. One of the favorite bogus calls made to 911 was the report of an officer needing assistance or signal 10-13. Callers knew that making such a call would result in a quicker response by the police.

Technology in the form of cellular phones may have also assisted the police. Prior to the arrival of the cellular phone, the ability of the general public to call the police had become increasingly difficult. The antiquated police call boxes that traditionally was the primary method of officers to contact the stationhouse were poorly maintained. Little effort was made to keep them in repair. The vandalism of these boxes and the destruction of public pay phones made it difficult to call for assistance. During late tours, officers in sector cars were frequently unable to find a working phone and would have to go into the stationhouse to confer with the desk officer. When citizens traveling by car witnessed a crime, they had little motivation to leave the comparative safety of their vehicles to find a public phone in working order to call the police. The use of the cellular phone may have changed that. Drug traffickers were among the first to recognize the potential of this new technology. The convenience and mobility that is afforded with the use of the cellular phone is of great assistance to the criminal. In the hands of citizens, the cellular phone may have had an effect on crime that is little recognized. It is a simple matter to dial 911 and contact the police while observing crimes in progress. Criminals know this as well as their potential victims. It is hard to measure crime prevention in the absence of actual statistics. Only recently, cellular phones have been issued to a number of school-crossing guards for their safety and obvious advantage of calling quickly for assistance when needed.

Another advance in technology that has aided the police is the video camera. The Rodney King incident in Los Angeles brought the problem of police brutality to the public as never before. The graphic tape recordings were broadcast continuously by the media. The negative impact that this incident had on the police will be felt for years to come. Yet, the video camera has been an asset to the police in unforeseen ways. For instance, many citizens have discovered that the camcorder can be a mighty weapon in solving problems in their communities.

The use of video cameras by private citizens acting without the direction of the police, are not hampered by search and seizure law that restricts the police in video taping without court sanction. For instance, in New York City, the NYPD must comply with the little known court case known as the "Handschu Decision". This decision resulted from a settlement or agreement entered into by the NYPD by which the police are restricted by guidelines that are directly supervised by the Federal Courts. Private citizens are free to videotape public areas such as the

streets of their neighborhood. Any criminal activity that is caught on tape is admissible in court. The constitutional restrictions do not apply to private citizens, only to governmental agencies. This is a powerful tool for the citizens who are victimized by drug dealers or prostitutes who cause neighborhoods to deteriorate. The removal of the anonymity of the criminal by video recordings of their physical identity and license plate numbers of their cars can solve many police-community problems.

Many police agencies have now put video cameras in patrol cars to record car stops. The taped records protect the officers from unjust complaints and record the physical condition of the drivers of vehicles. They have also recorded crimes against the police officers. The video camera also has been used to record arrest processing and handling of prisoners. Just the knowledge on the part of both prisoners and arresting officers that all conduct is being recorded may well prevent problems. Many police agencies around the world have been implementing closed-circuit television (CCTV) for the monitoring and recording of public areas for safety and security purposes. In New York City, the Housing Bureau of the NYPD has been in the forefront of such ideas. The potential for use in the transit system and in other public areas is apparent. These moves have not been without opposition by civil libertarians, however, in the public housing areas, the tenants have received the idea with enthusiasm. The June, 1999 issue of The Police Chief features an article by Richard Chace of the Security Industry Association. The article reports on a summit meeting between police and members of the security industry. At the meeting, Deputy Chief Constable Allen Brown, of the Northumbria Police Department in the United Kingdom delivered a keynote speech in which he noted that, by the end of 1999, one million CCTV cameras would be in use in public areas of Great Britain. With the threat of terrorist activity throughout the world, the use of CCTV monitoring can be of great assistance to law enforcement.

Recently, the 911 system in New York City has been experiencing some troubling difficulties. Perhaps a look at new thinking in police communications can help to alleviate some of those problems. There have been improvements in other cities that have implemented such new and sophisticated communications systems. Philadelphia and New Orleans have "CD-PD" systems that allow much more decentralized radio traffic between police units in the street. They have taken the burden off the central dispatchers and created open channels for cops to communicate without jamming the frequencies. It is an education to monitor the division radio during a car chase or signal 10-13. The dispatchers are often overwhelmed. The confusion and lack of central control of the radio results from too many units trying to input information at the same time. The decentralized "CD-PD" system allows the radio cars to communicate without jamming the radio frequencies. The patrol cars are equipped with laptop computers that enable the officers to monitor on-going calls. They can also communicate between each other without going through the central dispatcher. There is even new technology that enables police officers in radio cars to use laptop computers that utilize voice activated digital transmissions. This technology frees the cops from typing the information into the laptop. They merely speak and the voice-activated software converts their voice into digital text on the computer.

The June, 1999 issue of The Police Chief, the official publication of the International Association of Chiefs of Police has an article that highlights the advances in technology that is bringing about a revolution in police tactics and communications. The article written by Lieutenant Michael B. Foote, of the Santa

Ana, California Police Department, illustrates these exciting and innovative changes. We all know about the use of cameras to monitor ATM machines and other public places. However, the article shows how private security has teamed up with the police who can monitor crimes in progress in real-time by employing "remote intervention specialists". With interactive video security, a sophisticated audio and video system records and relays live action to a remote command center. The "remote intervention specialist" has the ability to monitor the action and not only notify the police, but to send digital images to the patrol cars that are responding to the scene. The laptops in the radio cars can receive images of the suspects of crime while they are responding to the location. The potential of this technology is mind-boggling. Think of the advantages for the police in hostage situations or violent crimes. This technology puts the police inside the location before they have arrived on the scene. The police have a witness who can advise them in real time of the situation they are confronted with. The safety of the police officers and potential victims is greatly enhanced. The eyewitness evidence that the video and audio records of the incidents provides invaluable assistance to the prosecution in court. These new and exciting techniques are adaptable in a large City such as New York. The partnership between the NYPD and the private sector has always provided the financial assistance that is needed to implement these advances in technology.

It is said that those who do not know the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. The lessons of the past should prevent those in police management from making the same mistakes that made the police slaves to the very technology that was meant to assist them in their primary mission

The improvements in the 911 system and recognition of the problems of the past couldn't result in the improvement of the quality of life for New Yorkers without the implementation of those policies by the men and women of the New York City Police Department. Their professionalism and dedication to duty has brought about the renaissance of the Big Apple. The statistics for the year 1997 shows that the Communications Division of the NYPD processed nearly 9 million calls to 911. Those calls resulted in over 4 million radio runs. If productivity is a measure of merit for pay increases, the police officers of the NYPD are the most productive and underpaid in America. .
