

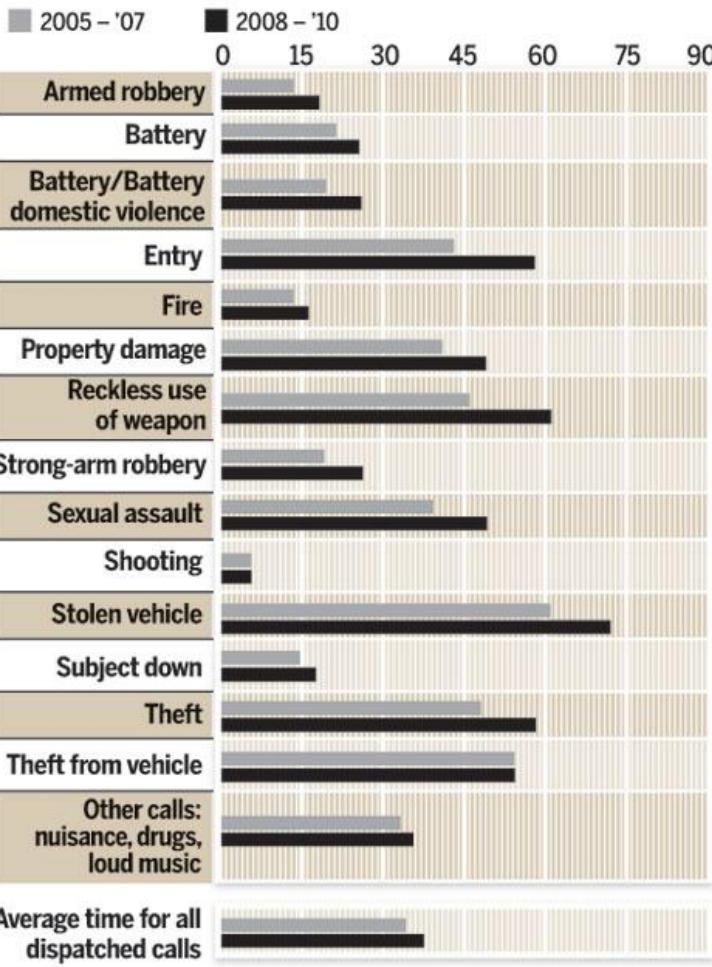


Is  
**911**  
a joke in your  
town?

# Milwaukee police response time slower since 2005

The Milwaukee Police Department's overall response time was 3.5 minutes longer on average in the three full years since Police Chief Edward Flynn's arrival than in the three years prior. Flynn has said slower response times are a result of shifting the department's priorities to proactive policing in high-crime areas and away from a focus on rapid response to calls.

## 3-year average police response times in minutes



# @bposton

Ben Poston analyzed police response times in Milwaukee



# @paleewire

Ben Welsh analyzed fire and medical response times in L.A.

<http://www.latimes.com/lafddata>

## Pricey home is no guarantee of a quick rescue

By KATE LEITCHCUM, BEN WELSH AND ROBERT J. LOPEZ  
Los Angeles Times

Wait for 911 medical aid vary dramatically across Los Angeles and many other U.S. cities. Some neighborhoods have the longest response times according to a Times investigation.

A Times investigation found standards adopted by the Los Angeles Fire Department require emergency crews to respond within six minutes to almost all medical emergencies. But the Times' analysis found that in affluent hill areas such as Bel Air have been twice as long as those in the Webside neighborhood stretching from Griffith Park to Pacific Palisades.

Firefighters failed to hit that mark nearly 60% of the time.

In contrast, neighboring the six-minute standard in most of their responses in the city's less affluent neighborhoods, in and around downtown, where 911 calls receive more frequent attention, the department派出了 more resources.

The responses were also sent to an average of nearly one call per minute.

The Fire Department's

## Egypt shifts Israel's footing on Gaza

By EDWARD SAWERS

JERUSALEM — Israeli's surprise military strike against Gaza militants killed the top military commander of Hamas and sent the now-volatile situation spiraling into another major confrontation — but in unexpected directions that underscored how quickly things can change, analysts say.

Katayeb, the militant group that had been working alongside Hamas, has joined forces with the pro-government Free Officers Movement in a venture to "reclaim" Gaza.

Compared with its recent past, there is a new sense of unity between the two groups. Indeed, Israel is likely to find itself more restrained politically and militarily than it has been in the new landscape.

Rather than being able to make up its mind about whether to send President Hosni Mubarak to help isolate Hamas, as he did during a 23-day operation last summer, it now must weigh whether another large-scale Gaza offensive would further undermine the much-RTP peace accord with Egypt, which has long served as a cornerstone of regional stability.

Wednesday evening, Egypt's new Islamist president, Mohamed Morsi, announced that he was recalling the country's ambassador to Israel to protest the seizure of the Palestinian territory.

"In a considerably new geopolitical world," says Michael Metal, an Egypt expert at the Herzing Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Ben Gurion University. "The equation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority has changed completely, involving Egypt too."

Israel's offensive, like previous ones, has been roundly condemned, but Morsi has brushed aside his own people's support for besieged Gaza. And he has helped Israel and Gaza's border.

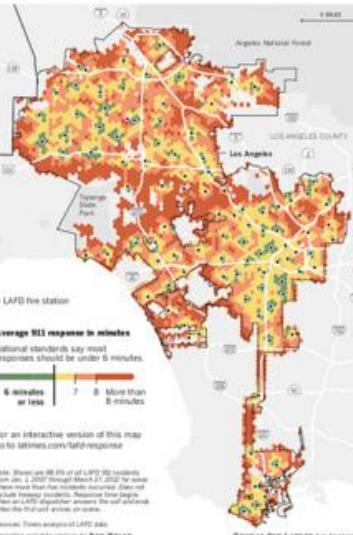
The course of Israel's sensible policy since 2009 has been shaped by Morsi's decisions, analysts say.

Under pressure from Morsi, Israel will find it difficult to ignore the anti-Israel mood of the Egyptian diaspora.

(See Gaza, A1)

## How fast is the LAFD where you live?

Rescuers are expected to arrive to nearly all 911 calls within six minutes, a national standard adopted by the Los Angeles Fire Department over the last five years. The Times analyzed more than 1 million runs by the Fire Department over the last five years and found that what Analytics can expect often depends on where they live.



Map: Shows all 911 calls to LAFD recorded from Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, 2011. Not all calls are answered within 8 minutes. Some calls take more than 8 minutes because calls don't always go directly to the right fire station. Response time is based upon the LAFD dispatcher's arrival at the scene. Data: LATimes.com/LAFD-response (See LAFD, A8)

Reporting and analysis by BEN WELSH

THOMAS JEFFERSON/Los Angeles Times

Romney blames loss on Obama 'gifts'

He says the president gave 'a lot of stuff' in his first term to young people and minorities to secure their votes.

By MARY BERTON

Mitt Romney said he believes his campaign will pay off part of his rival's strategy of giving "gifts" during his first term to those who supported him — such as last week's election: African Americans, Latino Americans.

"The Obama campaign was following the old playbook of giving a lot of stuff to young people, so I think we could get to vote for three and be encouraged to go out to the polls," he said at an African Americans, the Hispanic community and young people. "Romney will be making stops during a telephone town hall Wednesday. "In each case he will be asked questions: what they gave to each of those groups."

Romney's task analysis service had secretly tapped former ties to prestige and power that the energetic 37-year-old mother of three was once known for. His top aide is the social leader in this conservative military command.

Kelley believed a reporter was trespassing at her home — an estate she'd recently renamed for "honorability,"

## CIA scandal figure led lavish lifestyle

Ambitious Florida socialite Jill Kelley has had financial troubles.

By SHARON R. BENSON,  
DAVID S. CLOUD  
AND JOSEPH TANFANI

a wealthy neighbor this week, the Tampa socialite called 911 and claimed paramedic immunity.

The honorability scandal general, "so I have availability," an exasperated Kelley told the reporter, according to a recording released by her lawyer.

"I don't know if you want to get diplomatic," he said.

Kelley isn't a diplomat; she holds the ceremonial title of "honorability council" for

Tampa Knights, a non-profit organization that has earned cut-through ties to prestige and power that the energetic 37-year-old mother of three was once known for.

The honorability council, headed by David H. Petraeus as CIA director, threatens the career of CIA Director Leon Panetta, the top range of the social ladder in this conservative military command.

Kelley, the wife of a cancer surgeon, has a thus far蒸騰了, a troubled family.

She has sought a divorce, though unknown figures and a sex affair links her to

"honorability" — the

FBI last summer that she was being harassed by email

(See Scandal, A3)

COLIN LINTON

## A Kenyan cyber-revolutionary

Official cultivates a 'Silicon Savannah' that even offers an iCow app



TOM KAREN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES  
A CYBER CAFE beckons Kenyans in Nairobi. There are more than 40 million Internet users in this East African country of 40 million.

By ROBBIE DIXON  
REPORTER FROM NAIROBI, KENYA

**A** long Nairobi road, dusty Ngong Road, is noisy and crowded. It looks like a typical肯尼亚 street, but the busy neighborhood has a nickname: the "Silicon Savannah."

Techies, geeks and innovators from Kenya's capital and the rest of the country converge here every day to meet, work online, shop, seek advice and share ideas. They come from the Web developers, a meeting of mobile app-developers, entrepreneurs, journalists and innovative Kenyan apps, most designed to work with the not-so-smart phones most Kenyans still own.

They're also virtual veterinary

service that coaches small farmers on how to tend their dairy animals, help them increase crop production, and return, which helps small farmers determine the right price for their produce, said Peter and Rose Mutharika, which allows people to report and solve government service failures (See Kenya, A8)

Walter

Mosby cloudy.  
L.A. Basin: 74/58. A&Z Complete Index ... A&Z printed with soy ink on a partially recycled paper.



PENGUIN  
BOOKS

**WHAT WE TALK ABOUT  
WHEN WE TALK ABOUT  
RESPONSE TIMES**

---

BEN WELSH

COMPLETE



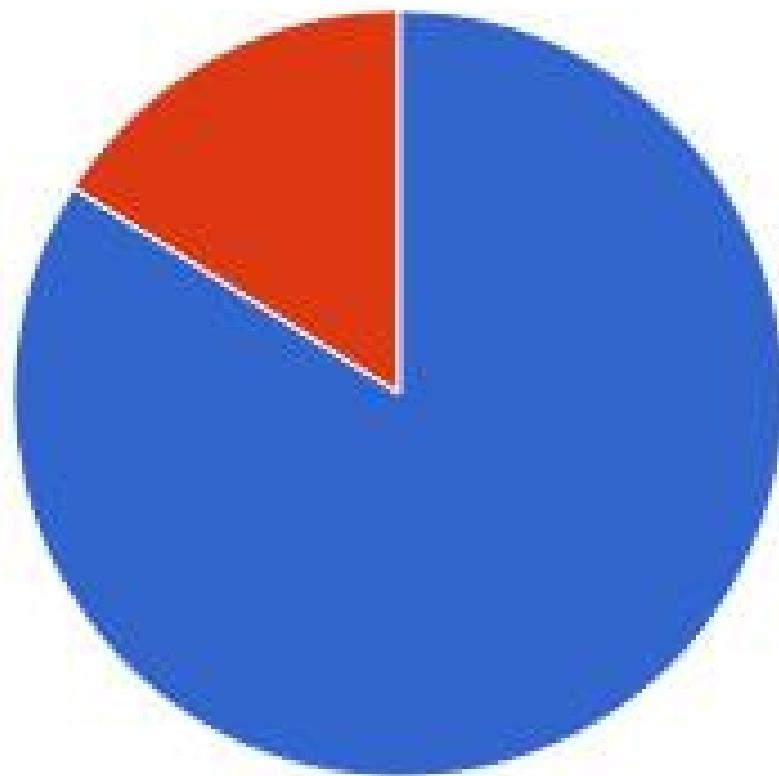
UNABRIDGED

50c

# WHAT FIREFIGHTERS REALLY DO

- More than 80% of LAFD responses are medical
- Media coverage and fire department PR tend to focus on fires
- Extremely long calls get good anecdotal coverage, but full system rarely analyzed

Fire vs. medical responses at LAFD



(This pie contains real data!)

# LATEXTRA

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2012 :: LATIMES.COM/LANOW

## Hospitals targeted by union proposals

MICHAEL J. MISHAK  
REPORTING FROM  
SACRAMENTO

As healthcare workers gathered outside California hospitals recently to collect signatures for two proposed ballot initiatives, they told voters the measures would rein in excessive hospital billings and expand healthcare for the poor.

Unspoken in the public pitch was the fact that the measures, backed by the Service Employees International Union and aimed at private hospitals, would have a major effect on facilities the union has tried unsuccessfully to organize, while exempting those where many of its members work.



DON BARTLETT/Los Angeles Times

**SERENE HAVEN** has helped Donald Gentry, 57, hugging his daughter Donasia, 9, on the front lawn of their apartment complex. Gentry, a former Marine, was homeless for many years.

## An ally for homeless vets

Buy today's deal  
at [LAdeals.com](http://LAdeals.com)

\$49 for 400 scanned  
photos, negatives &  
slides (Reg. \$99)

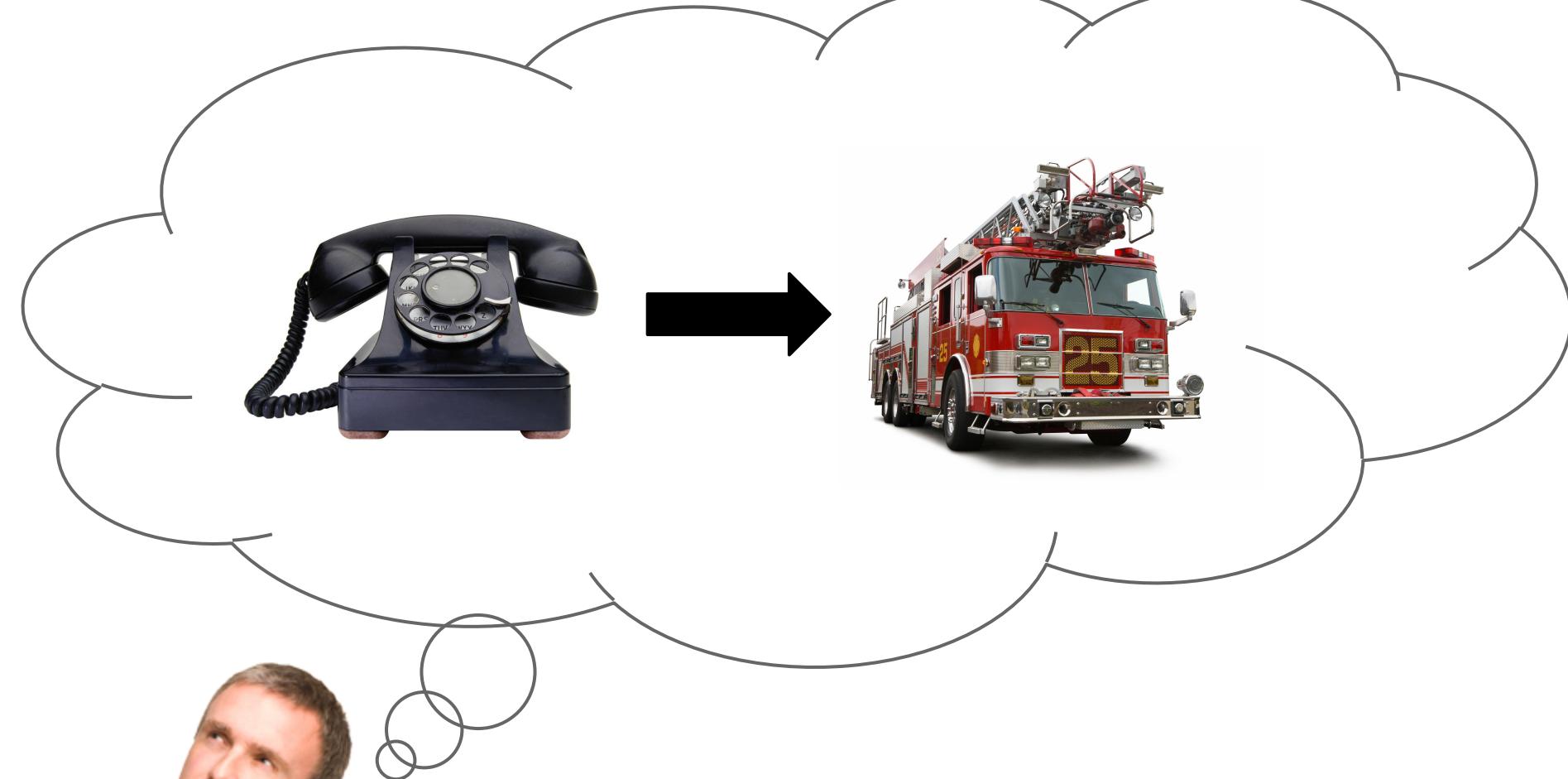
**LADEALS.COM**  
Los Angeles Times

## Politics lights a fire under LAFD

A mayoral hopeful unwittingly exposes overstated emergency response times.

KATE LINTHICUM

A Los Angeles mayoral candidate took an early campaign swipe at his leading opponents this week and inadvertently exposed the city Fire Department for publishing misleading performance data.



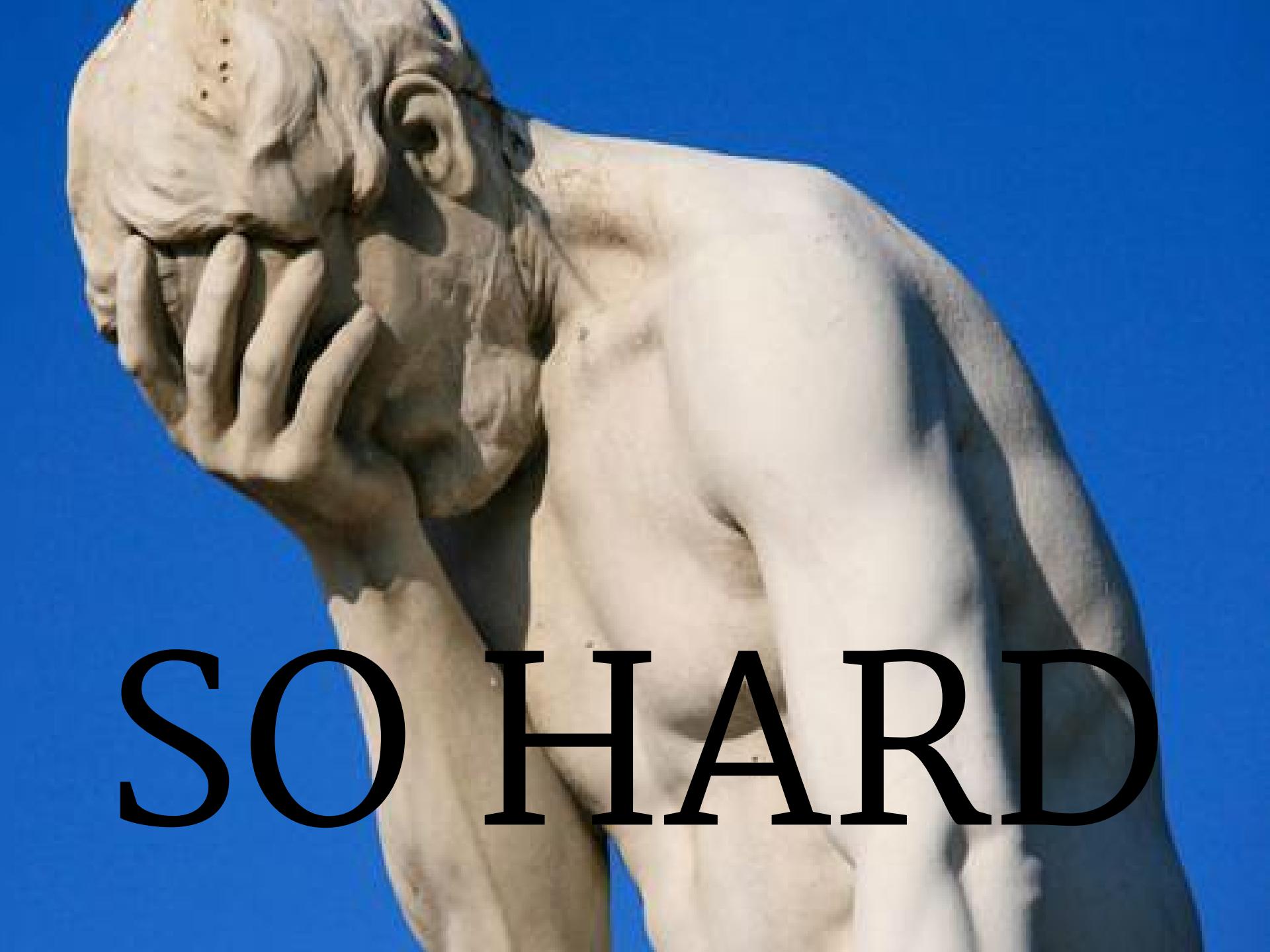
**A layman's definition**  
How long it takes from when you dial 911 until a rescuer arrives at the scene.



HOW  
HARD CAN  
THIS BE?

**STEVE LOPEZ**  
@latimes columnist

Source: <http://lat.ms/11DUUNB>

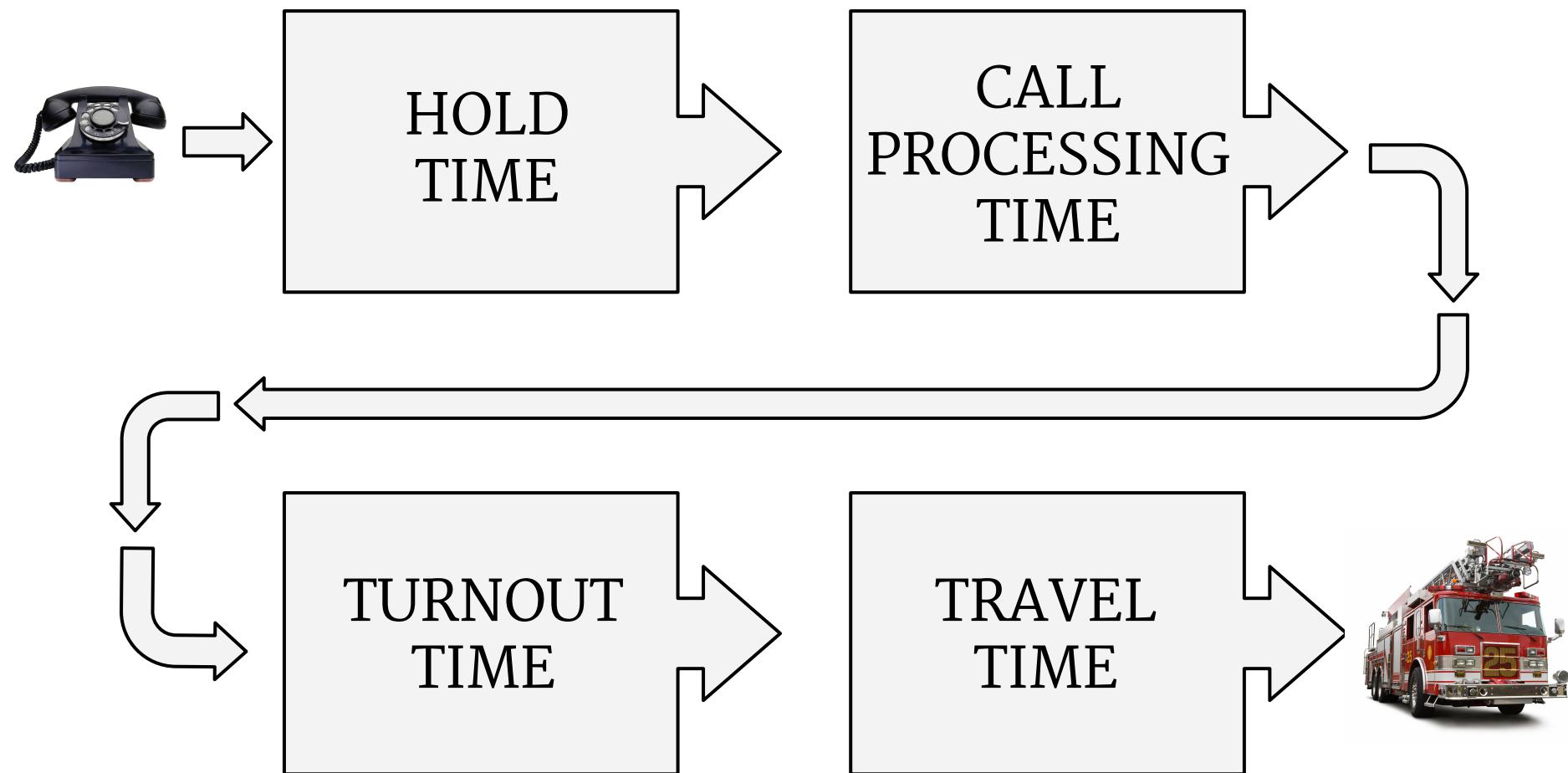
A classical statue of a shirtless man, possibly a deity or a figure of distress, with his head buried in his hands. He is set against a solid blue background.

**SO HARD**

# WHY

- Your call is passed between different departments.
- Each can have its own database, analytics, politics.
- Often, nobody responsible for tracking the whole thing.
- People who could have few incentives, little training.

# A SIMPLIFIED VERSION



# HOLD TIME

- How long it takes for a dispatcher to pick up the 911 call.



# CALL-PROCESSING TIME

- How long it takes the dispatcher to log the incident and send help.



# TURNOUT TIME

- How long it takes rescuers to suit up and get ready.

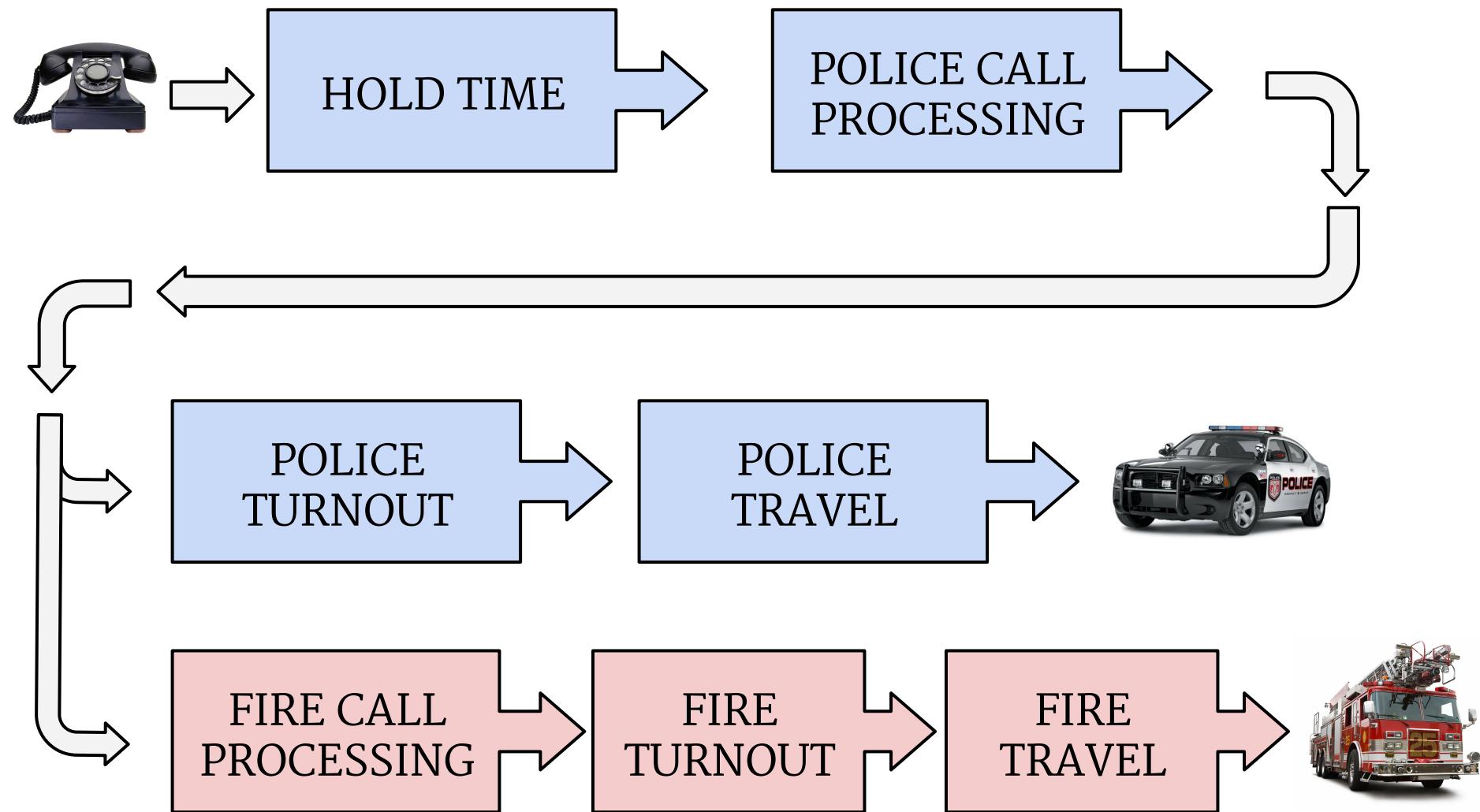


# TRAVEL TIME

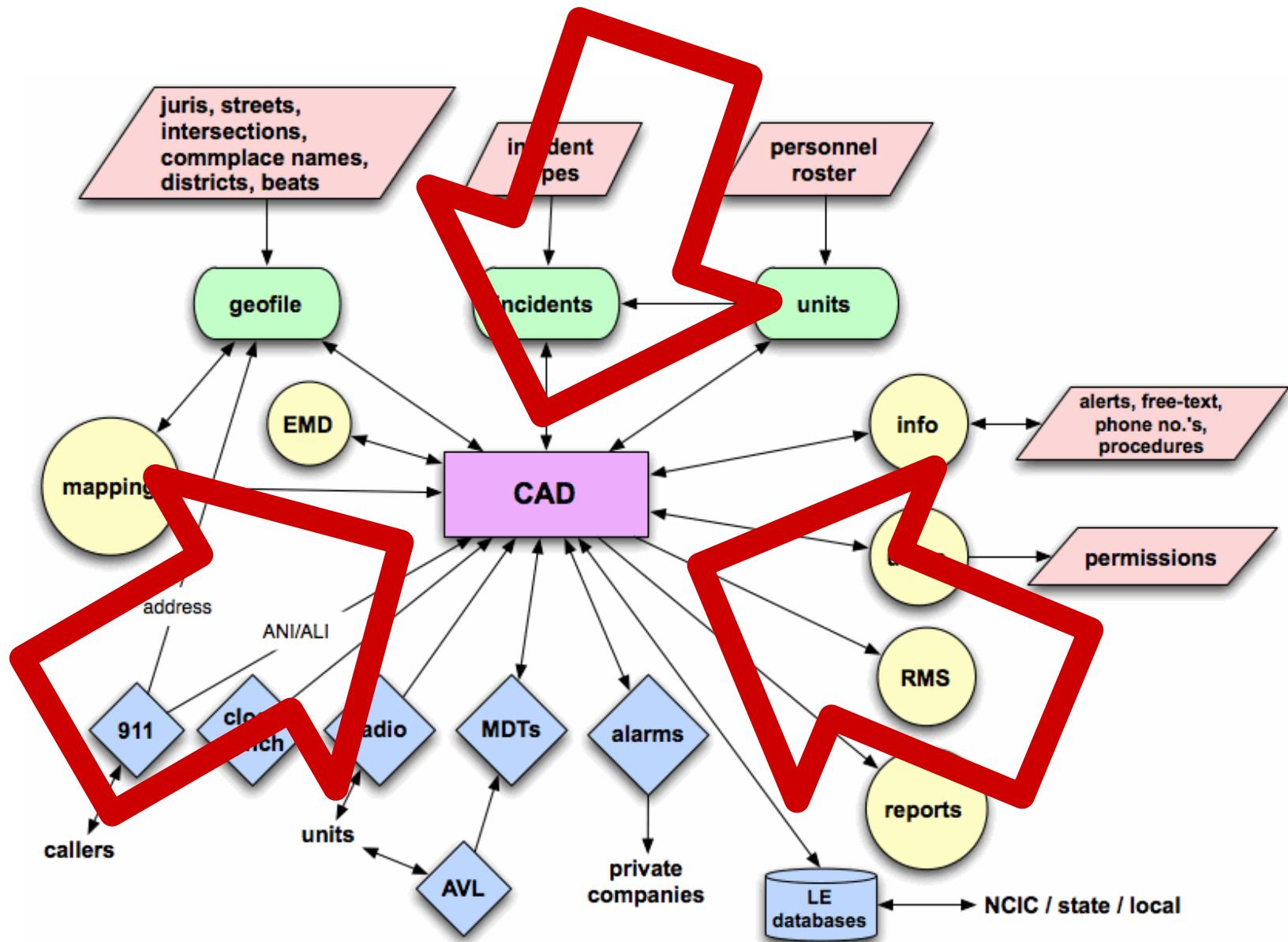
- How long it takes rescuers to drive to the scene.



# A REAL-LIFE VERSION



# AT THE CORE, A PUBLIC DATABASE



# INCIDENT TABLE

- One record per call
- Unique identifier
- Incident type
- Dispatch address
- Lots of timestamps

Single Record View

◀ ▶ ⌂ ⌃

INCIDENT_NUMBER	200701010011
INCIDENT_TYPE	6D1A
FLRE_RA_TYPE_IND	RA
ST_NUM	8811
ST_DIRPREF	S
ST_NAME	CENTRAL
ST_TYPE	AV
COMMUNITYCODE	MET
MAP_CD	566.3382
INITIAL_911_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.04.17.000000000 AM PST
CREATION_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.04.49.000000000 AM PST
PEND_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.05.45.429161000 AM PST
GET_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.14.03.240459000 AM PST
DISPATCH_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.05.45.686607000 AM PST
ONSOCENE_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.10.35.214481000 AM PST
LAST_UNIT_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.55.00.712476000 AM PST
TIME_ENDED	01-JAN-07 01.00.10.714576000 AM PST

Help      Apply      Cancel

# RESPONSE TABLE

- One record per unit
- Many to one with call
- Describes unit type
- More timestamps

Single Record View

« « » »

INCIDENT_NUMBER	200701010011
UNIT_NAME	RA25
DISPATCH_SEQUENCE	2
DISPATCH_STATUS	QTR
DISPATCH_RFS	25
WRS_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.05.45.700897000 AM PST
ENR_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.07.16.514189000 AM PST
ONS_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.25.20.369302000 AM PST
TSP_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.34.51.528547000 AM PST
HSP_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.43.04.095518000 AM PST
AVI_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.55.00.697693000 AM PST
RELEASE_TIME	01-JAN-07 12.55.00.699328000 AM PST
RELEASE_STATUS	NAV

Help      Apply      Cancel

WHAT'S  
YOUR  
STANDARD?



**BRANT HOUSTON**  
Journalism professor

Source: My memory

# CLEAR STANDARDS



BUT THEY ARE OPTIONAL

# HOLD TIME

- How long it takes for a dispatcher to pick up the 911 call.
- NENA 56-005 says 90% of calls should be answered in under 10 seconds



# CALL-PROCESSING TIME

- How long it takes the dispatcher to log the incident and send help.
- NFPA 1221 says 90% of fire and medical calls should be dispatched in under 60 seconds



# TURNOUT TIME

- How long it takes rescuers to suit up and get ready.
- NFPA 1710 says 90% of medical units should be moving in under 60 seconds.



# TRAVEL TIME

- How long it takes rescuers to drive to the scene.
- NFPA 1710 says the first fire or medical unit should arrive in under 4 minutes for 90% of responses.



Do local firefighters  
meet the standards?

Are times getting  
faster or slower?

Does everybody get  
the same service?



**You**  
Professional observer

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FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2012

latimes.com



CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

**TECHNICIAN** Meichu Chen works the control panel for a news program at New Tang Dynasty Television in New York. The station, owned by a group banned in China, has aggressively pursued Chinese political scandals.

COLUMN ONE

## Dispatch lag slows LAFD call response

Operators on average take far longer than the national standard to send rescuers, a Times analysis shows.

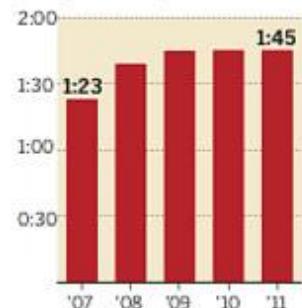
BY BEN WELSH,  
ROBERT J. LOPEZ AND  
KATE LINTHICUM

When Javier Ortiz collapsed in his backyard in Echo Park, rescuers were stationed in a firehouse just a half-mile away.

But the Los Angeles Fire Department dispatcher who answered the 911 call from Ortiz's daughter took more than 2½ minutes to send the firefighters — nearly three times longer than a national standard for processing calls for help.

### Response time

From time Fire Department answers a medical 911 call to dispatch of unit:  
(Average, in minutes)



Source: Los Angeles Fire Department

KHANG NGUYEN Los Angeles Times

ers were dispatched to medical calls within a minute 38% of time, the analysis found. By 2011, that number decreased to just 17%.

Sunday

# Los Angeles

# Times

latimes.com

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2012

## WITHOUT A COUNTRY



DON BARTLETTI Los Angeles Times

LUIS MARTINEZ holds his younger sister Amor during a visit to the river wash where they and their grandmother ended their nearly two-day walk with smugglers who guided them to Nogales, Ariz.

# Boundaries hold up L.A. 911 response

City residents often must wait for LAFD rescuers even when county crews could respond faster.

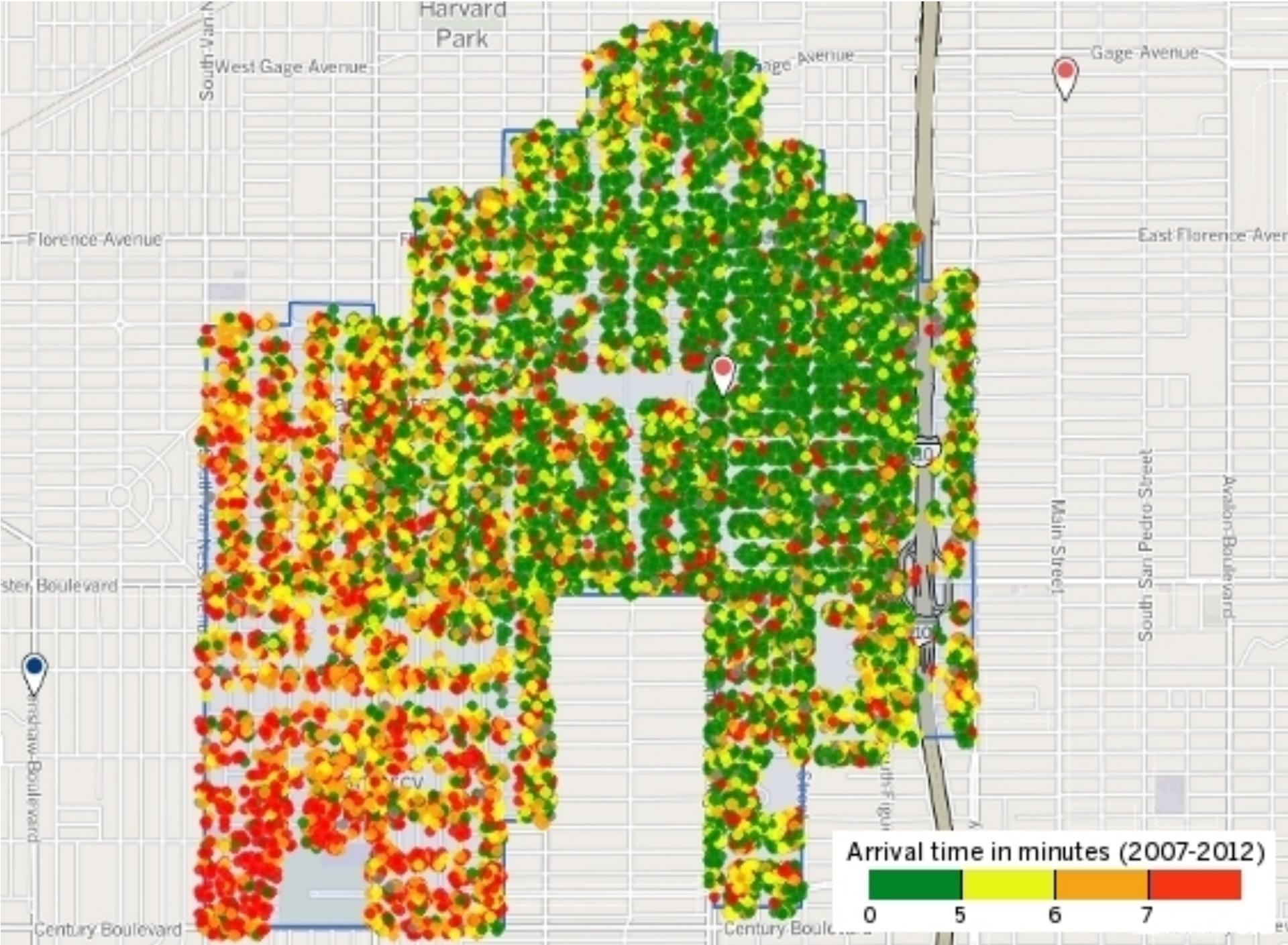
BY ROBERT J. LOPEZ,  
BEN WELSH  
AND KATE LINTHICUM

Stephanie Hooks pleaded for help after collapsing on the floor of her South Los Angeles home.

"I can't breathe.... Help me breathe!" the 53-year-old grandmother wailed as frantic family members took turns on the phone with a Los Angeles Fire Department

utes for LAFD paramedics to reach Hooks, who went into cardiac arrest and died at a hospital. A faster response might not have saved her, but the February 2009 incident highlights a failure to fix how the agency responds to thousands of emergency medical calls along L.A.'s jagged borders despite reforms promised decades ago.

Los Angeles' city and county fire agencies agreed in 1979 to link their dispatching operations to save lives and cut costs. But a Times analysis of more than 1 million LAFD responses over the last five years shows the agency rarely reaches across jurisdictional lines for county help. One result: 911





LAFD Station #57

County Station #173



Hooks home



County Station #170

County Station #14

LAFD Station #64



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2012

latimes.com

## Pricey home is no guarantee of a quick rescue

BY KATE LINTHICUM,  
BEN WELSH  
AND ROBERT J. LOPEZ  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Waits for 911 medical aid vary dramatically across Los Angeles and many of the city's most exclusive neighborhoods have the longest response times, according to a Times investigation.

Under national standards adopted by the Los Angeles Fire Department, rescuers are supposed to arrive within six minutes to almost all medical emergencies. But the Times analysis found that in affluent hillside communities stretching from Griffith Park to Pacific Palisades,

firefighters failed to hit that mark nearly 85% of the time.

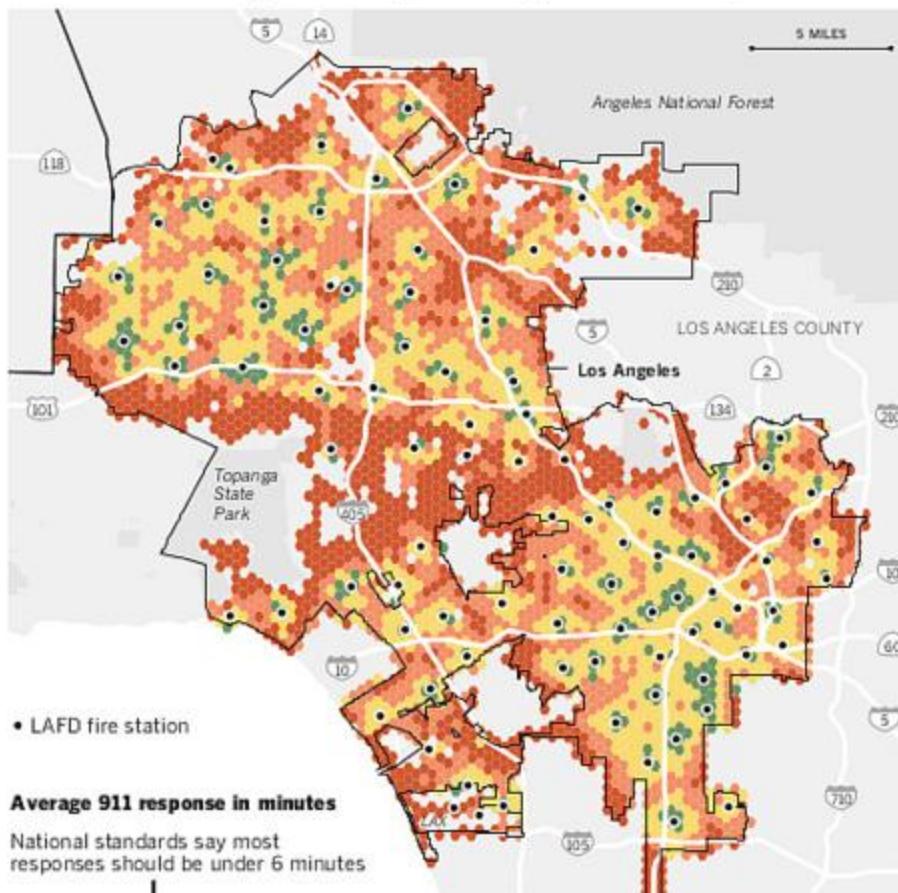
In contrast, rescuers beat the six-minute standard in most of their responses in the more densely populated neighborhoods in and around downtown, where 911 calls are more frequent and the department deploys more resources.

The disparities were also seen in cases of cardiac arrest, one of the most time-sensitive emergencies; brain damage can begin just four minutes after the heart stops beating. Over the last five years, cardiac arrest responses to incidents in Bel-Air have been twice as long as those in the Westlake neighborhood surrounding MacArthur Park, where rescuers arrived on average in just over five minutes.

The Fire Department's

### How fast is the LAFD where you live?

Rescuers are expected to arrive to nearly all 911 calls within six minutes, a national standard Los Angeles Fire Department leaders concede they routinely fail to meet. The Times analyzed more than 1 million runs by the Fire Department over the last five years and found that what Angelenos can expect often depends on where they live.



## Romney blames loss on Obama 'gifts'

He says the president gave 'a lot of stuff' in his first term to young people and minorities to secure their votes.

BY MAEVE RESTON

Mitt Romney said Wednesday that his loss to President Obama was due in large part to his rival's strategy of giving "gifts" during his first term to three groups that were pivotal in the results of last week's election: African Americans, Latinos and young voters.

"The Obama campaign

## INTERACTIVE MAP

# How fast is LAFD where you live?

An analysis by the [Los Angeles Times Data Desk](#)

202 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA [GO](#)

Rescuers are expected to arrive to nearly all 911 calls within six minutes, a national standard LAFD leaders concede they routinely fail.

The Times analyzed more than a million runs by the Fire Department over the last five years and found that what Angelenos can expect often depends on where they live. You can read about the causes and patterns [in the Times story](#).

Use this map to compare the LAFD's performance across L.A.

### Average full 911 response in minutes (2007-2012)



[National standards](#) say most responses should be under 6 minutes

From 2007-2012:

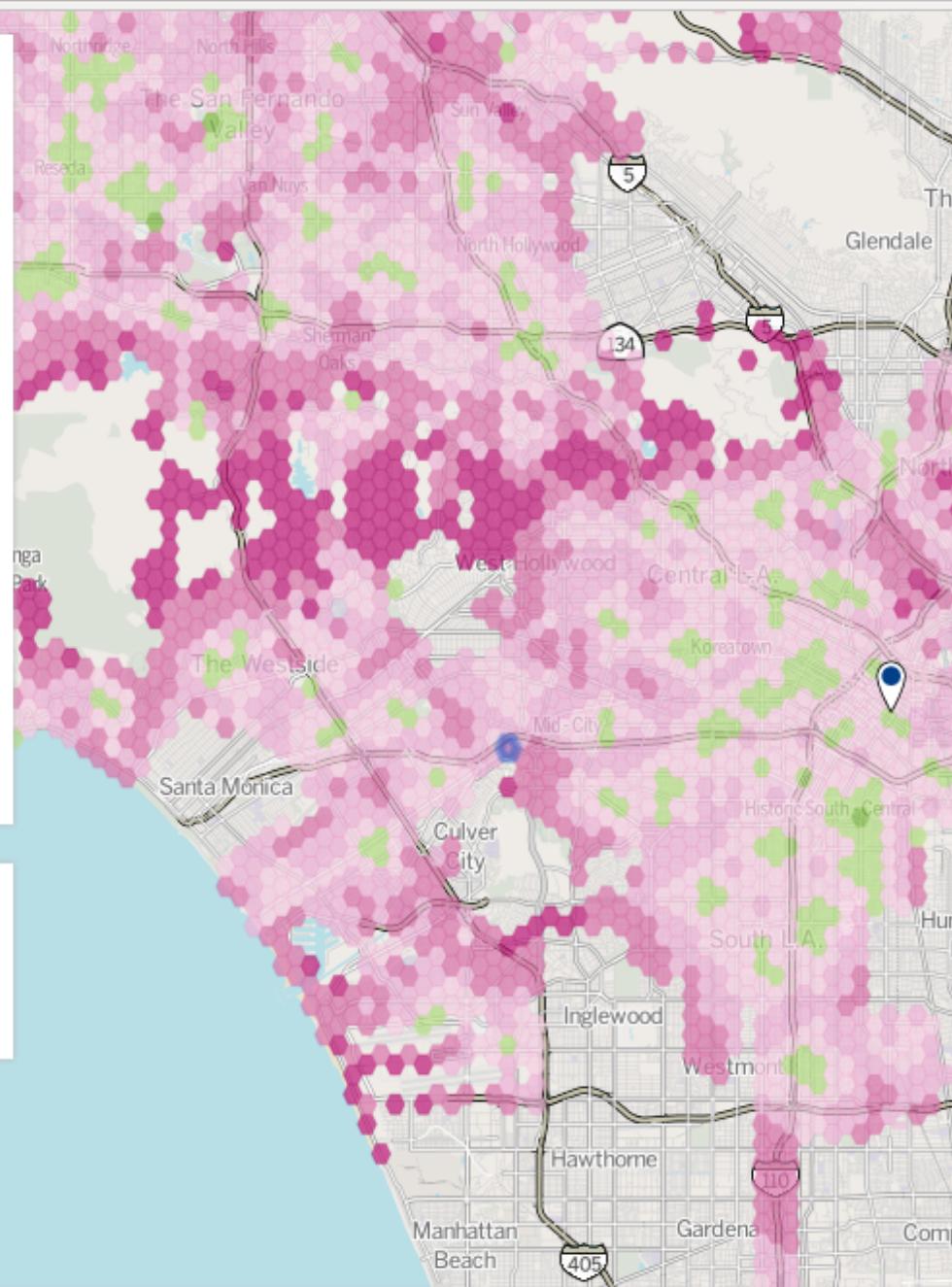
407 total responses



8 min., 5-second average response



Hide ▲





Time isn't everything

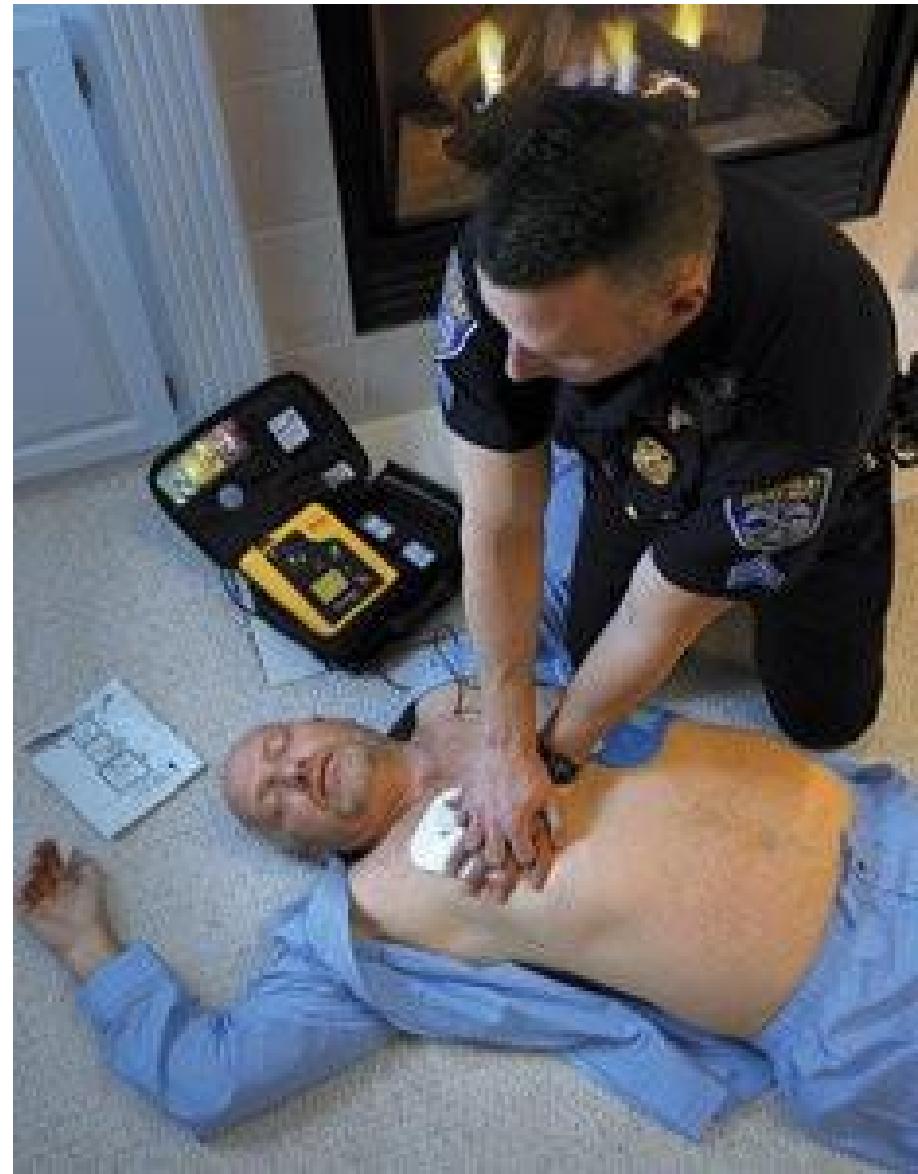
Most calls are not emergencies

Grandma gets lonely

**GENERIC FIRE CHIEF**  
Anytown, USA

# FOCUS ON CARDIAC ARRESTS

- Only ~2% of medical calls, but everyone agrees time imperative
- Brain death can begin after as little as four minutes
- Recent push for increased speed from scientists and doctors



# Los Angeles Times

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2012

latimes.com



YAHYA ARHAB European Pressphoto Agency

**A YEMENI BURNS** a mock U.S. flag as hundreds storm the American Embassy in Sanaa. Attacks on U.S. missions have created a deepening crisis as America struggles to ease tension in the Middle East.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# 'Arab Spring' shows its thorns

## Fire dispatch script blamed for CPR delays

A new LAFD study raises concerns about number of questions operators are required to ask 911 callers.

By ROBERT J. LOPEZ,  
BEN WELSH AND  
KATE LINTHICUM

Los Angeles Fire Department dispatchers waste valuable time getting 911 callers to start CPR on cardiac arrest victims, often beginning the life-saving procedure after the point at which brain death begins, according to an internal study obtained by The Times.

The study raised particular concerns about time-consuming scripted questions dispatchers are required to ask, including one

### CPR assistance

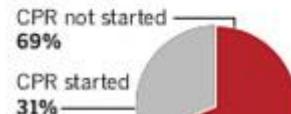
A study found that LAFD dispatchers were taking too long to help callers start performing CPR.

Elapsed time after call pickup (in minutes and seconds)  
To start CPR (average) 4:12

To start CPR (minimum/maximum) :32 7:36

Elapsed time after heart stops (in minutes and seconds)  
Until brain damage can begin 4:00

Percent of calls in which CPR was not started



# YOU NEED A TEAM



**@LAJourno**  
Investigative reporter,  
nightblogger



**@katelinthicum**  
City Hall beat writer,  
fears no deadline

# AND A FEW RABBIS



## INSIDER DATA GEEKS

Every database has quirks,  
they know them



## REAL FIREFIGHTERS

They live where your data  
meets reality

# THE END

All materials at [palewi.re/talks](http://palewi.re/talks)



# "RESPONSE TIMES DON'T MATTER"

(And other  
excuses police  
will make)

By Ben Poston





- Let's say you get police response time data
- Your PD will likely say response times don't matter.
- They will say that they are not a good measure on which to judge a PD's performance.

# How come?



Research done in the 1970s and 1980s that showed that a rapid police response to calls for service only makes a difference on crimes in progress and victims often don't report crimes right away.

The research suggested that just rushing to calls depletes valuable resources that could be used for crime prevention.

# Milwaukee PD: A case study

- MPD crime numbers had declined for 4 straight years
- We heard skepticism from every corner of the community
- I wanted to get behind the numbers



# Response times lag as strategy shifts

I reported response times were 10% slower on average and they had gotten slower in 13 of 15 major categories.

**Examples:** Officers took more than 2 hours to respond to a fatal car crash, 45 minutes for a fatal stabbing and more than a half-hour for an armed robbery

Residents complained that cops don't respond at all to minor crimes like theft from auto, drug dealing, graffiti, and loud music.

## Police change strategies and priorities

Since taking over in 2008, Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn has reorganized the Police Department in many ways. Most notably, police now devote more resources to proactive policing in high-crime areas, which can be seen in the significant rise of traffic and subject stops conducted each year.

As a result of the shift to high-visibility patrols, response times have gotten slower, something Flynn sees as an acceptable trade-off. He points to the sustained drops in crime numbers and relatively steady clearance rates.

Also, the number of calls diverted to the department's Differential Police Response Unit has more than doubled, which police say allows officers to devote more time to high-priority calls.

All of this occurs while the police force remains about the same size as it was six years ago.

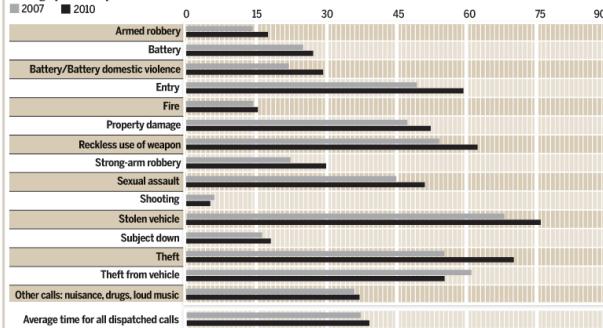
**Traffic and subject stops on the rise ...**  
Under Chief Edward Flynn's leadership, the Milwaukee Police Department has nearly quadrupled the number of traffic stops and more than tripled subject stops. This is part of Flynn's strategy of high-visibility policing.

Traffic and subject stops		(* Through June 21)	TOTALS
		TRAFFIC STOP	SUBJECT STOP
2007	52,930	14,424	67,354
2008	62,531	16,054	78,585
2009	140,342	27,270	167,612
2010	190,605	47,614	240,219
2011	88,483	25,142	113,625

## ... as a result, police response to calls for service has gotten slower ...

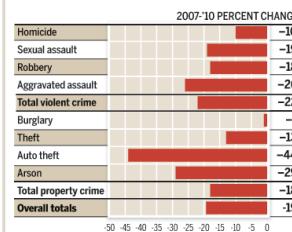
Compared with 2007, Milwaukee police responded more slowly to 13 out of 15 major call categories last year. Flynn said slower response times are a result of shifting the department's priorities to proactive policing in high-crime areas and away from a focus on rapid response to calls. For an interactive graphic that lets you compare response times and call volumes, go to [jsonline.com/watchdog](http://jsonline.com/watchdog).

### Average police response times in minutes



## ... but crimes in the city have dropped overall ...

Except for burglary, which is down 1%, every violent and property crime category has decreased by double digits since 2007.



## ... as the number of calls diverted continues to increase ...

The Milwaukee Police Department's Differential Police Response Unit has handled more than twice as many non-emergency calls last year than in 2008 – the year it was created. Police say the differential unit gives officers more time for proactive policing efforts and crime-solving, and the number of dispatched calls has dropped.



## ... meanwhile, the size of the police force has been stable

Milwaukee police response times have gotten slower in the past three years while the size of the force has held steady.



Sources: Milwaukee Police Department; Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission; Federal Bureau of Information Uniform Crime Report

Journal Sentinel

# Police response: "Meh"



The department's take:  
Response times don't matter  
that much.

"Since the average resident of this city is willing to wait four hours for the cable guy and half a day for a furniture delivery, it seems to me a reasonable delay in responding for a call is an acceptable balance," the police chief said.

# That's not all that changed ...

The department's entire strategy had shifted from a reactive strategy to more of a proactive one.

Less focus on rapid response and instead quadrupled the number of cars stops and tripled the number of subject stops. They were all about "high visibility policing."

The police said this deployment shift was a key driver to their declining crime numbers

## Traffic and subject stops on the rise

Under Chief Edward Flynn, the Milwaukee Police Department nearly quadrupled the number of traffic stops and more than tripled subject stops since 2007. Traffic stop figures through October show the department is on pace to make a similar number of stops this year.

**Traffic and subject stops** (\*Through Oct. 31)

	TRAFFIC STOPS	SUBJECT STOPS	TOTALS
2007	52,930	14,424	67,354
2008	62,531	16,054	78,585
2009	140,342	27,270	167,612
2010	192,605	47,614	240,219
*2011	153,028	49,613	202,641

Source: Milwaukee Police Department

Journal Sentinel

# Calls are prioritized

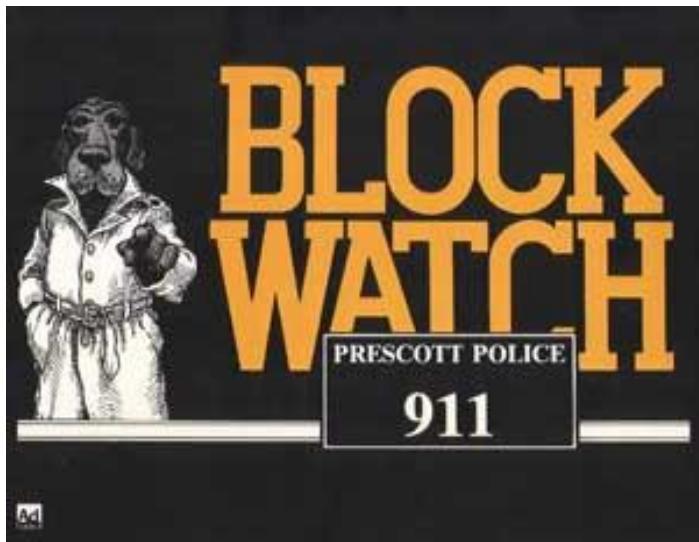


Like most big-city PDs, Milwaukee police now prioritize their calls, using a system from Priority 1 to 5. For minor calls like loud music and drug dealing, police often take reports over the phone or send an officer the next day to prioritize.

They called it the **differential police response unit**.

In Milwaukee, the number of these had more than doubled in 3 years, raising lots of questions.

# Tips for reporting on police response times



**Hit the meetings:** go to neighborhood watch block meetings.

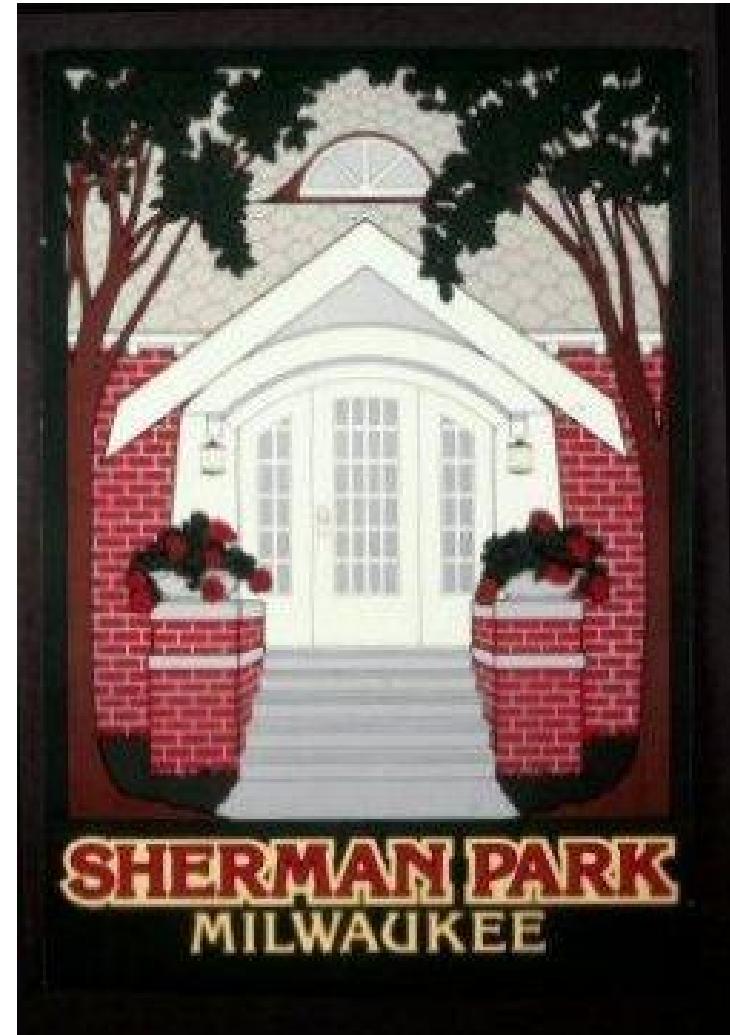
This is where people complain every week about crime and poor police responses.

Residents also complained about feeling harassed by police dispatchers – they claimed they bullied them or talked them out of reporting a crime.

# Spend a night in a hood:

I had been talking to resident Thom Reed, who lived in a high-crime neighborhood. The things he told me were hard to believe, so I went out to see it myself.

In one six-hour period, I witnessed shots fired and drug dealing. It helped me write with authority and add color to [a follow-up piece.](#)



# Differential police response units

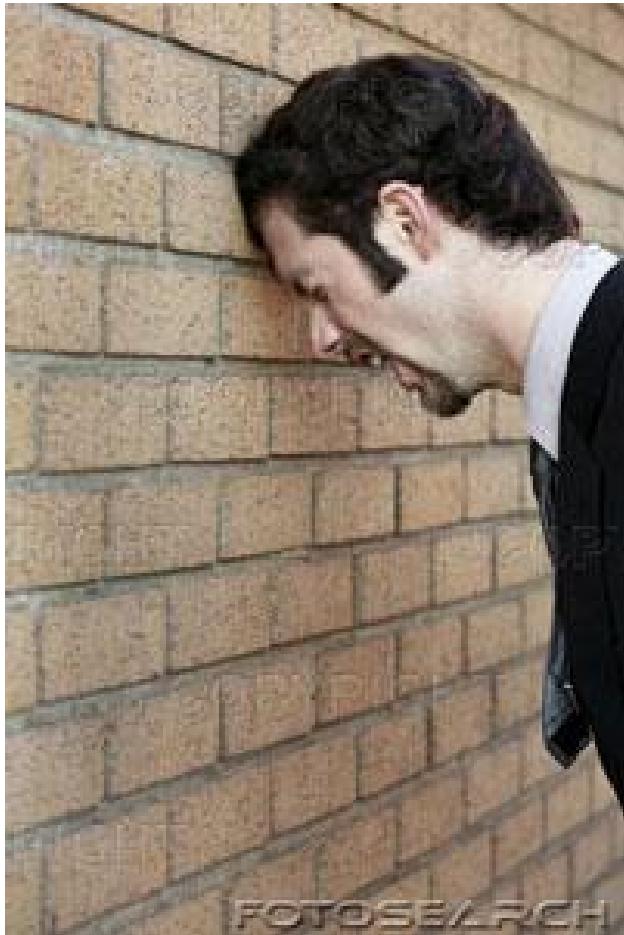


Giving a lower priority to less serious calls makes sense, but this policy upset residents more than anything.

Most people have expectation of seeing a police cruiser when they call 911. After a few hours, they get frustrated and give up and this colors their view of police.

Skeptics claimed that police used the DPRs to slough off crime, though we never could prove that.

# KNOW YOUR DATA



I initially got police response time data and realized later that it was from time entered to dispatched, but didn't capture the time to arrive on scene, making the times seem faster.

# GET THE RAW DATA



We got aggregated data for the 2011 stories, but later got the raw CAD data that allowed us to dig deeper for trends. You can also use that call data to populate an interactive maps of calls.

# Track crime through the criminal justice system



CAD data is the very beginning of the process. With police CAD data, you can request the associated incident report number. This would allow you to see how often police create a report by call type and overall. You can also see how often police flag calls as nuisance calls.



# LINK 'EM UP!

If you were so inclined, you could then link those incident reports up with crime data if your police department is a NIBRS agency or collects incident-level data.

From there, you merge that data with your District Attorney's case management data (assuming your DA is not living in the stone ages, which many are).