

# MIAMI BEACH

NO. LTC # **446-2017**

## LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 29, 2017

SUBJECT: **THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (PSCU)**

This purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to inform the Mayor and City Commission of an administrative transfer of operational and administrative oversight with respect to PSCU.

When I first joined the City in 2013, PSCU was overseen by the Police Department. During my first year, my concerns with the performance of PSCU combined with concerns regarding leadership of the department led me to transfer oversight to the Department of Emergency Management. I knew that someday I would revisit whether that was the right place for PSCU, but at the time I felt it was the right way to proceed.

Under Charles Tear's leadership, we were able to stabilize the unit and enact some improvements. I recognize that public safety communications operations are difficult and concerns about these units are commonplace throughout the state. Consequently, it has not been an easy process, including challenging labor management issues, but Chuck and his team have done their best. There have been some performance issues raised in recent months, however, and I certainly want to make sure our first responders are getting the best support services possible.

In response to these concerns, therefore, I tasked Fire Chief Virgil Fernandez approximately one month ago to conduct an assessment of PSCU and prepare a series of recommendations. I received a first draft of the report last Friday, which identifies various shortcomings and makes a series of recommendations. The report concludes that all issues can be remediated with the implementation of the proper plan and I know that Chief Fernandez feels that it is quite conceivable, over time, to achieve national certification for PSCU as is the case with both our Fire and Police Departments.

In order to achieve these results, I have directed Chief Fernandez, Director Tear and Chief Oates to work on a transition plan that will result in the turnover of administrative oversight of PSCU to the Fire Department, effective October 1. Daily operational oversight would be through an executive director that would be responsible to Chief Fernandez and Chief Oates, or their respective designees. The goal is to make sure that each Department gets what it needs from PSCU. In the meantime, Director Tear can focus on the emergency management function to make sure our City is as ready as possible to mitigate against and recover from natural and manmade disasters. As the events in Texas show, you can never be too prepared.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

# MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
NO. LTC # **012-2019**

## LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Dan Gelber and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: January 9, 2019

SUBJECT: Update on Public Safety Communications Division Accomplishments.

The purpose of this LTC is to provide you with an update of the Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD) accomplishments since its transition from the Department of Emergency Management to the Fire Department effective on October 01, 2017.

Below is a brief summary of several of the achievements that have been accomplished thus far:

- Throughout the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Public Safety Communications Division was engaged in a hiring and training effort. As a result of this effort, 97% of the Division budgeted positions are now filled. Currently, sixty-five (65) out of sixty-seven (67) budgeted position in the division are filled and the personnel in those positions have been successfully trained and certified.
  - In the last fiscal year (2017-2018), the Division has trained and/or hired seventeen (17) employees in the functions of 9-1-1 Call-Taker, Police/Fire Dispatching, and Criminal Justice Information System (NCIC/FCIC) Operator.
  - As a result of the hiring and training effort, the previous practice of frequently forcing employees to work overtime in order to maintain minimum staffing in the center has been reduced significantly.
  - Additionally, the Division is now able to consistently provide a dispatcher on tactical channels during police and fire incidents such as perimeters, fires, and drownings. This capability is in addition to maintaining normal staffing on the main police and fire dispatch channels.
  - The monthly overtime cost has also been significantly reduced as a result of the increased staffing and is on target to finish the fiscal year under budget. The below chart illustrates the comparison of overtime cost between 2017 and 2018 for the months of September, October, November, and December. This comparison shows an average overtime cost reduction of 54% for the four months.

	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
2017	\$143,001	\$45,372	\$85,881	\$112,380
2018	\$78,260	\$15,754	\$54,130	\$28,115
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$64,741	\$29,618	\$31,751	\$84,265
REDUCTION PERCENTAGE	45%	65%	37%	75%
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE REDUCTION FOR THE FOUR MONTHS	<b>54%</b>			

- On November 28, 2018, the Public Safety Communications Division achieved the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch "Accredited Center of Excellence" (ACE) status for its use of the Medical Priority Dispatch System protocols. (Reference attached news release)
  - As reported in Letter to Commission Number 073-2018, the Public Safety Communications Division began a Medical Quality Assurance program on December 18, 2017. As mandated by existing State of Florida regulations, this program began providing feedback and remediation training to all call-takers on a daily basis which has led to a steady increase of protocol compliance scores from its inception. This program was a key factor in the achievement of this accreditation (ACE) recognition.
  - Additionally, and most importantly, the increased performance and compliance to recognized industry standards has allowed the 9-1-1 Center to elevate the level of service provided to medical emergency callers during multiple incidents, especially during life and death situations such as cardiac arrests.
- The Public Safety Communications Division staff has been working in coordination with Police and Fire personnel to develop and implement required aspects of the Police and Fire call-taking, pre-arrival instructions, and quality assurance program.
  - This effort began when the City Commission approved the acquisition of the Police and Fire call-taking, pre-arrival, and quality assurance program in October 2018.
  - This will allow our Division to implement a Quality Assurance program for the police and fire disciplines as well and as also required by existing State of Florida regulations.
- The Public Safety Communications Division has certified 100% of all of its employees as State of Florida 911 Public Safety Telecommunicators, in compliance with Florida Statute 401.465.
  - As reported in Letter to Commission Number 073-2018, the Public Safety Communications Division developed a new 911 Public Safety Telecommunicator program curriculum. This new program was officially approved by the Florida Department of Health on March 22, 2018.
  - Upon approval of the program, the Division began the process of certifying the thirteen (13) Public Safety Communications Division employees that remained uncertified. This process was completed on December 07, 2018, when the last employee passed the exam.
- The Public Safety Communications Division developed a program to provide and manage the mandated continuing education hours (CEUs) for the different certifications required of call-takers, police/fire dispatchers, criminal justice information operators, and supervisors.
  - As it was reported in Letter to Commission Number 073-2018, the Public Safety Communications Division purchased a training software (TargetSolutions) in early 2018. Subsequent to its purchase and issuance of LTC # 073-2018, the software was customized to meet the training and certifications needs of the Division, and is now being utilized by all employees and management personnel to maintain mandated certification and training requirements. The deployment of this software has allowed

the Division to transition to a paperless electronic system.

- Throughout this year Public Safety Communications Division has deployed technologies that have increased the capabilities of the 9-1-1 Center, which were not previously available.
  - The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software was upgraded in the month of May, 2018. As part of the upgrade, a new mapping application was developed and customized for our agency to enhance the capabilities of 9-1-1 call-takers and dispatchers.
    - 9-1-1 call-takers are now able to locate emergency cell phone callers with relative ease in comparison to the previous technology that was being utilized in the center.
    - The location of police officers and firefighters is now available through this new mapping functionality, which increases the safety of officers and firefighters.
  - As part of the CAD upgrade, the Fire Department automatic response recommendation function was developed. This function has practically eliminated the incidents where erroneous units were being dispatched to fire and medical incidents.
  - The 9-1-1 phone system was upgraded in the month of November, 2018. As part of the upgrade, the phone system was also customized and enhanced to specifically meet the needs of our agency. More specifically, 9-1-1 call-takers are able to place emergency wireless callers on hold without losing the critical location information of the caller.
- On July 13, 2018, the design for a new Harris P-25 Public Safety Radio System was approved. The next step is for City of Miami Beach personnel to travel to the Harris factory in Lynchburg, Virginia to conduct functional tests on our system, which will be assembled and functional prior to our arrival. Thus far the cost of the system is on target to be under budget. The new system is being designed to bring many new capabilities to City of Miami Beach police officers, firefighters, Ocean Rescue, and all other radio system users. These new capabilities include:
  - Significantly expanding the coverage area for radio users. This new system is being designed to interface with the City of Miami and the City of Hialeah public safety radio systems, which will allow police officers and firefighters to seamlessly continue to receive and transmit after they leave the boundaries of the City of Miami Beach. This capability does not exist today, and we are being advised by the Harris Corporation that we will be one of the first or the first system that is being designed to allow police officers and firefighters radios to roam into a neighboring system.
  - Significantly increasing the in-building communications capabilities of end users. This is an improvement from current capabilities, because subsequent to our current system deployment, more ten years ago, many high-rises have been built. Through the years these new structures have decreased the ability of our current system to communicate indoors.
  - The new system will allow dispatchers to continuously know from their work station the location of police officers, firefighters, and all radio users through their portable (handheld) radio. This feature will significantly increase the ability of locating emergency personnel in the event of a life or death situation.
- As reported in the Letter to Commission Number 073-2018, the Public Safety Communications Division hired a new full-time Criminal Justice Agency Coordinator (CAC) in November of 2017. One of the new position responsibilities is to make current all of the thousands of Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) fingerprint database (FALCON) entries for the City of Miami Beach Police Department. This task was completed and the database is now maintained on an on-going basis.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****MIAMI BEACH PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATION DIVISION HONORED  
FOR ACHIEVING ACCREDITATION AS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

*[Miami Beach, Florida—Nov. 28, 2018]*—Miami Beach Public Safety Communication Division is taking center stage in recognition of achieving the most prominent distinction in 911 emergency communication services. The communication center is the 263rd emergency dispatch center in the world to attain International Academies of Emergency Dispatch® (IAED™) status as an Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) for its use of the Medical Priority Dispatch System™ (MPDS®). This distinction places it among the very highest-performing emergency dispatch agencies in the world.

ACE inspires agencies to provide superior, industry best practices in public safety and to employ efficient use of resources when handling all emergency call situations. Accreditation requires an intensive self-assessment based on the IAED's rigorous Twenty Points of Accreditation. In order to achieve accreditation, agencies must meet or exceed all twenty points of accreditation, which requires participation from the department chief down to the individual emergency dispatcher. Because ACE agencies abide by these standards and have fulfilled these requirements, callers can have peace of mind knowing their needs will always be appropriately addressed and that they will receive the help they need.

Miami Beach is one of 17 agencies in Florida to attain ACE distinction.

Lazaro Guerra, Miami Beach Public Safety Communication Division Administrator, said no one can achieve the lofty status as an ACE without deep commitment and determination. He's grateful that his staff bought into this process and work so hard to meet and maintain the standards.

"Everyone has to be dedicated," he said. "You must embrace it. Attention to detail is important."

For Guerra, working toward ACE status was something he knew would lift everyone on the team to a higher level. He also said the achievement exemplifies everything the center stands for.

"The staff has been receptive and cooperative," he said. "The level of care has improved dramatically. The ACE framework forces us to maintain strict processes. It's validation of the help we provide."

The IAED's Board of Accreditation reviews the center's application and documentation of the Twenty Points and conducts a thorough on-site visit.

"There's a tremendous amount of work that goes into achieving ACE status," said IAED Chair of Accreditation Christof C. Chwojka. "We're certainly proud of Miami Beach Public Safety Communication Division and its accomplishment."

Not only is this a significant milestone for the entire team at Miami Beach, but it can also bring peace of mind to local residents who call for emergency assistance. Guerra said many people have misconceptions of 911 and don't understand what emergency dispatchers do when the phone calls come in. He hopes this achievement will help people recognize the critical work his staff does.

"It's important for the general public to know we're an ACE agency," he said. "The public perception is that a 911 center is where we simply notify first responders of a situation. An ACE center brings help to the public from the moment they dial 911. We spend valuable minutes that impact lives and give hands-on assistance from the minute people call."

There are currently more than 190 centers throughout the world that currently have the ACE distinction among the 3,500 centers worldwide using the fire, police, medical, and nurse triage protocols for safe and efficient response to the wide variety of emergency situations.

## Contact Information

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ACCREDITATION PERIOD

2023-2026

# MIAMI BEACH PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

The International Academy of Emergency Police Dispatch officially recognizes Miami Beach Public Safety Communications Division as an **ACCREDITED CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY POLICE DISPATCH** for demonstrating compliance to the highest level of standards as set forth in the Academy's Twenty Points of Accreditation. This accreditation is granted as of March 3rd, 2023 and is valid until March 3rd, 2026.

  
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RE-ACCREDITED CENTER  
OF EXCELLENCE

#22

## TWENTY POINTS OF ACCREDITATION

1. All police dispatch calltaking, dispatching, and supervisory workstations.
2. Current Police Priority Dispatch System (PPDS) licensing of each EPD position.
3. Current Academy certification of all EPD personnel.
4. How Academy certification and case review will continue to be maintained.
5. Full activity of Quality Improvement (QI) committee processes.
6. EPD quality assurance and improvement methodology.
7. Case review at the Academy's recommended number and percentages of randomly reviewed cases.
8. EPD quality assurance and improvement database.
9. Consistent PPDS case review to determine if monthly average case evaluation compliance levels meet accreditation standards:
  - 10%-Partial Compliance
  - 10%-Low Compliance
  - 7%-Non-CompliantPercentage of deviation accepted:
  - 3%-Critical Deviation
  - 3%-Major Deviation
  - 3%-Moderate Deviation
  - 3%-Minor Deviation
10. Correct case review and QI procedures validated through independent Academy review.
11. How law enforcement field personnel were oriented to the proper use of the PPDS and feedback methodology.
12. Local policies and procedures for implementation and maintenance of EPD.
13. Current Continuing Dispatch Education (CDE) and EPD recertification program functions.
14. Process that will occur when police response is requested by another agency.
15. Properly established local configuration of all PPDS response assignments.
16. How PPDS response assignments will be regularly reviewed and recommended changes approved.
17. Incidence of all PPDS codes and levels.
18. Specific police administration oversight and involvement in EPD activities.
19. Sharing of nonconfidential data with the Academy.
20. Support of the Academy's Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, and practice standards.