



## Charleston County News Release

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### **9-1-1 Center Takes Major Step Toward Full Consolidation**

*Charleston County takes on 30 employees from local agencies and restructures 9-1-1 call processing*

The [Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center](#) announces more major steps toward full consolidation of 9-1-1 call taking and emergency services dispatching within Charleston County.

A total of approximately 30 dispatch employees from local agencies became [Charleston County Government](#) employees on July 1, 2010, an important transitional step toward full 9-1-1 consolidation. The following 9-1-1 and dispatch operations have been added into the County's Consolidated 9-1-1 Center in the following chronological order:

- North Charleston [Police](#) and [Fire](#) Departments
- [St. Andrews Public Service District Fire Department](#)
- [Folly Beach Police and Fire](#)
- [St. Johns Fire District](#)
- [City of Charleston Fire Department](#)

The changes, for now, will not be obvious to the public, although they will need to remember to call 9-1-1 directly for emergencies rather than the seven-digit numbers that have sometimes been used in smaller communities. All residents of Charleston County are urged to call 9-1-1 for emergency situations.

"This early consolidation into the existing Consolidated 9-1-1 Center is a move fully supported by the emergency response chiefs who comprise the [Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch Board](#)," said Jim Lake, Director of the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. "Formal agreements from the various jurisdictions involved were also approved in the cooperative endeavor."

Another recent step includes restructuring how 9-1-1 calls are processed. The new efficiencies obtained from the consolidation efforts allow a call taker to remain on the line with the caller to gather more information and to provide additional safety at the scene and/or medical instructions while responders are being sent by a separate dispatcher.

The change not only enhances interoperability and cooperation among response agencies, but also eliminates some of the delay and potential for lost calls caused by transferring.

"The ability for dispatchers to talk directly to each other as they are handling emergency calls requiring multi-jurisdictional response has already proven to reduce time spent in getting the appropriate responders to the scene," said North Charleston Police Chief Jon Zumalt, who serves as chairman of the Consolidated Dispatch Board.

The public should be aware that when callers dial 9-1-1 for law, fire or medical services, they are asked more questions than in the past. These questions are designed to address the health and safety of the caller and those who are responding.

"This does not delay the response because a dispatcher is sending help while the call taker is speaking with the caller," Lake said.

A new Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center is currently under design, and the building is expected to be completed during 2012. The new center will allow for full consolidation of all 9-1-1 and emergency dispatch operations in Charleston County, and will also be the location of the County's Emergency Operations Center.

Including the agencies listed above, the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center already dispatches for:

- [Charleston County Sheriff's Office](#)
- [Charleston County Emergency Medical Services](#)
- [Charleston County Volunteer Rescue Squad](#)
- [Awendaw Fire Department](#)
- Dewee's Island Fire Department
- [Lincolntonville Police & Fire Departments](#)
- St. Pauls Fire Department

The following agencies will transition into the center over the next two years:

- Charleston [Police](#) Department
- Isle of Palms [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments
- [James Island PSD Fire Department](#)
- Mount Pleasant [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments
- Sullivan's Island [Police](#) & [Fire](#) Departments

For more information regarding the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center and Consolidated Dispatch Board, visit <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/dispatch/index.htm>.