

News Release



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County 9-1-1 Center Employee Charged with Obstruction of Justice and Misconduct in Office

As reported by the Charleston County Sheriff's office earlier today, Charleston County detectives arrested and charged Dezerea S. Shelton with one count of Obstruction of Justice and Misconduct in Office at approximately 10 a.m. today. Charleston County Government requested a Sheriff's Office investigation after being informed of complaints that Shelton, while serving as a call taker with the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, improperly handled calls for service.

No personal injuries have been reported as a result of Shelton's actions, and no other 9-1-1 Center employees were found to have been involved or associated with the incidents.

Shelton began her employment as a Consolidated 9-1-1 Center Telecommunicator on September 9, 2011, after successful completion of the County's background review, which included a criminal records check, polygraph and drug test. Shelton was released from County employment on Sept. 5, 2013.

Charleston County Administrator Kurt Taylor and Charleston County 9-1-1 Center Director Jim Lake have been involved in the investigation since the initial complaint.

"Emergency call taking is one of the most critical operations of county government," Taylor said. "It is crucial that the public have confidence that when they call for help, it will be sent immediately. I will not tolerate any employee's failure to perform duties that could affect public safety. We have a great 9-1-1 team with outstanding leadership and training. It is unfortunate that this individual failed to do her job."

The County has already increased the level of internal reviews for 9-1-1 calls.

"Although all calls have been stored for potential review, we have added end-of-shift reports that would more immediately show blank incidents. Each shift supervisor is now reviewing these reports at the end of their shift on a daily basis," said Jim Lake, Charleston County 9-1-1 Center Director. "Also, we will be conducting our random audits more frequently."

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- written by Jennie Flinn -