

San Francisco 311 Customer Service Center

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Background

The city and county of San Francisco's (CCSF) Department of Emergency Management (DEM) is the primary agency responsible for emergency communications in San Francisco. On a daily basis, the department's Emergency Communications Division operates the 911 and other public safety phone numbers, and dispatches public safety professionals to handle emergency situations. Public safety dispatchers (PSD) work out of a secure facility equipped with advanced telecommunications, computer-aided dispatch applications, and radio dispatch systems, where they receive communications from the public and transfer that information efficiently to public safety response personnel.

The San Francisco 311 Customer Service Center (311) is responsible for all non-emergency requests for local government information and services that do not require a police dispatch. These calls are handled by trained non-public safety personnel, customer service representatives (CSRs), who are responsible for the computer entry that routes the requests to the proper agency for handling. An emergency call received by 311 CSRs is transferred directly to a 911 PSD. Non-emergency calls received at 311 that require a police dispatch are transferred directly to the non-emergency police unit. Conversely, all other non-emergency calls made to 911 are transferred to 311.

Joint Information System

If there is an event, 311 is one of several departments responsible for supporting the Joint Information System (JIS). Led by the mayor's office, the JIS is the

mechanism through which CCSF will organize, integrate, and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging. The JIS will be used to coordinate all incoming event information from CCSF public information officers (PIOs), the Emergency Operations Center (when activated), 311, and all forms of media. The JIS is always on active status, and is available for use at all times.

311 plays a key role in JIS information gathering and dissemination by working closely with departmental PIOs. The following link details the departments, the process and how 311 fits into the structure: <http://www.sfdem.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/DEM/PlansReports/ESF15-JIS.pdf>

Physical Support

Finally, 311 is also responsible for supporting 911 functions in the event that the 911 primary facility becomes inoperable and/or requires more physical space in an emergency. Upon activation of the back-up facility, necessary equipment will be positioned at workstations and limited office space will be made available to enable the 911 operation.

Similarly, during an infectious disease emergency response when a high-volume of health-related public inquiries are expected, 311 will provide the Communicable Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) Section of the San Francisco Department of Public Health with 24 call center workstations and phones. Additionally, the CDCP will guide 311 CSRs in the triage of any related calls and transfer of applicable calls to CDCP staff.