



**CITRUS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

*A Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency*

—SHERIFF—  
**JEFFREY J. DAWSY**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **911 Communications Center Using New Method to Handle Emergency Police Calls**

Starting Monday, Oct. 19, the Sheriff's Office nationally accredited 911 communications center is stepping up to a higher level of service.

The center, under the direction of Capt. Joe Eckstein and the management of communications manager Michelle Virgilio, will begin using a new way of answering and processing 911 calls. Call-takers (aka communications officers) will utilize Emergency Police Dispatch, or EPD, a structured call-taking method in which calls are handled with consistency and accuracy – despite the experience level of the call-taker.

The basis for EPD is a series of questions that the call-taker asks to make sure the appropriate actions are taken. Each call begins with "911, what's the address of your emergency?" Then, depending upon the situation, a series of questions is asked.

The center has been utilizing Emergency Medical Dispatch, or EMD, for years to handle medical 911 calls.

The Sheriff's Office 911 center is currently accredited through the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch for EMD and will eventually achieve this distinction with EPD. The

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center is also one of only 50 centers in the United States to hold a public safety communications accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, or CALEA.

Although the process may seem tedious to some callers, especially those who have called 911 before, the methodology of asking specific questions is proven to give callers the best response possible given any emergency situation. Depending upon the information received by the call-taker, he or she will dispatch the necessary services to the incident location, but will continue to ask the caller critical and incident-specific questions to better meet the needs of the situation.

According to Capt. Eckstein, the move to EPD is a win/win for the citizens of Citrus County. "We are always looking for ways to improve service to our citizens, and EPD is a great opportunity to do this. The Citrus County Sheriff's Office will be the first agency in Florida to implement EPD. There have been many highly televised incidents of 911 calls being handled improperly, and EPD will help us make sure that doesn't happen."

If you have questions about the new EPD call-taking process, please visit the [prioritydispatch.net](http://prioritydispatch.net) Web site, or call Michelle Virgilio at 249-2700.

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