

# E-Comm 2018 Annual Report





# Corporate Overview

## WHO WE ARE

Through our two 9-1-1 call centres, our wide-area radio network used by police, fire and ambulance personnel in the Lower Mainland, and our integrated dispatch service that supports more than 70 police agencies and fire departments, E-Comm provides emergency communications services in 25 regional districts across British Columbia. E-Comm is unique in Canada for its size, breadth of service and expertise.

Established in 1997 under the provincial *Emergency Communications Corporations Act*, E-Comm is owned by the municipalities and public safety agencies it serves and is recognized as an industry leader whose defining mission is to help save lives and protect property and to create safer communities in British Columbia.

## WHAT WE DO

### WIDE-AREA RADIO NETWORK

E-Comm owns and operates the largest multi-jurisdictional radio network of its kind in British Columbia, which is built on earthquake-resistant infrastructure. Currently, BC Emergency Health Services, all police agencies and 15 fire departments in Metro Vancouver and Abbotsford use E-Comm's radio network to communicate their essential messages.

### 9-1-1 CALL-ANSWER/ POLICE & FIRE DISPATCH SERVICES

In 2018, E-Comm received nearly 1.6 million 9-1-1 calls. The organization currently provides dispatch services to 33 police agencies and 40 fire departments\* in B.C. E-Comm's integrated, multi-jurisdictional dispatch provides economies of scale, the ability to deliver top-tier technology to smaller communities, and increased operational efficiency. E-Comm emergency call takers and dispatchers are supported by a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system that allows for swift and easy access to a wide range of information critical to emergency response.

*\*As of February 20, 2019.*

### OUR VISION

**Safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public safety communications.**

### OUR MISSION

**To deliver exceptional emergency communications to the public and first responders that help save lives and protect property.**

### OUR VALUES

**Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, Collaboration**

### TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

E-Comm provides a variety of secure, mission-critical technology services that support its own operations and those of its public safety partners, including multi-jurisdictional CAD systems, records management systems and electronic mapping services. E-Comm's in-house Technology Services team has the depth and breadth of experience to support a diverse range of software, systems and platforms to ensure continuity of service 24/7.

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# Message from Leadership



As we headed into the organization's 20th year of providing emergency communications services in our province, we took the opportunity in 2018 to see where we are at and where we want to be, as we start our third decade of helping to save lives and protect property.

From readying a new consolidated 9-1-1/police dispatch centre on southern Vancouver Island to completing the largest, most complex technology project in E-Comm's history, to developing a new strategic roadmap for the organization, 2018 was a year of new beginnings for E-Comm.

To prepare for the early 2019 "Go-Live" of the new South Island/9-1-1 Police Dispatch Centre, our staff and Vancouver Island partners dedicated enormous effort in 2018 toward preparing the centre for service. To see this state-of-the-art,

post-disaster facility rise on a hill in Saanich in just 18 months is a shining example of what happens when people work toward a common goal of enhancing public safety. We thank all of our partners, including the B.C. Government, Capital Regional District and police agencies across central and southern Vancouver Island for their collaboration on this initiative. We can now say E-Comm operates two emergency communications centres in our province, handling 99 per cent of 9-1-1 calls in B.C.

The final milestone of the Next Generation Radio Program was realized in April 2018 when the legacy radio network was officially shut down and we began operating exclusively on the advanced next generation P25 system. A special congratulations to our Technology Services team, and in particular our outstanding Wireless group, for their hard work, expertise and determination in implementing this critical piece of public safety infrastructure on time and under budget. More than 30 police, fire and ambulance agency transitions to the new radio system were undertaken—a monumental task completed in one year. In 2018, we also welcomed three new radio partners, as Port Coquitlam Fire & Emergency Services, Langley Fire Rescue Service and the Township of Langley Fire Department all joined the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network. In joining the radio system, all three municipalities became Class A Shareholders in our organization, along with the City of Burnaby, which also became a Class A Shareholder in 2018.

We are especially proud that 89 per cent of residents of the Lower Mainland have indicated their confidence in our 9-1-1 and dispatch services and we sought to carry this responsibility of their trust throughout the year, as our staff, Board of Directors, public safety partners and key stakeholders all participated in the development of E-Comm's new strategic plan: (a)SPIRE 2025.

We have a bold plan—one that is focused on service, the people who provide it, innovation and trusting relationships. It is a vision to 2025 that includes transforming the 9-1-1 platform provincially, increasing operational and technical resilience against all kinds of threats, and bringing our services to more communities in British Columbia. In short, (a)SPIRE 2025 will help us be the best we can be for our people, our partners and the public. To learn more, we hope you will visit [ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca).

On that note, it is only fitting that we express our profound thanks to all of our staff, our first responder partners, our shareholders and Board of Directors for their knowledge, expertise, suggestions and contributions throughout 2018 as we continued to focus on delivering top-quality public safety communications and took great strides to move toward success in the future.

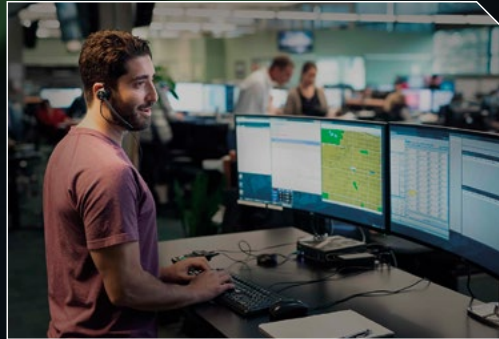
**Doug Campbell**  
*Board Chair*

**Oliver Grüter-Andrew**  
*President & CEO*



# 2018 Highlights

- Port Coquitlam Fire & Emergency Services joins radio system
- E-Comm and partners complete Next Generation Radio Program
- Langley City Fire Rescue Service joins radio system
- Township of Langley Fire Department joins radio system
- (a)SPIRE 2025, our new strategic plan, approved
- City of Burnaby becomes Class A Shareholder
- New South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre built and ready for 2019 operations



# The Numbers

**1.588M**  
calls to 9-1-1

**98%**

of 9-1-1 calls answered in  
five seconds or less

**464,816**  
police emergency calls

**74,643**  
fire emergency calls

**49M**

transmissions on the  
E-Comm radio system

**554,180**  
non-emergency  
police calls

**29,113**  
non-emergency  
fire calls

**89%**

public confidence  
in E-Comm services

*Police and Fire emergency and non-emergency call volumes noted above are for the agencies for which E-Comm provides dispatch.*



# 2018 Year in Review

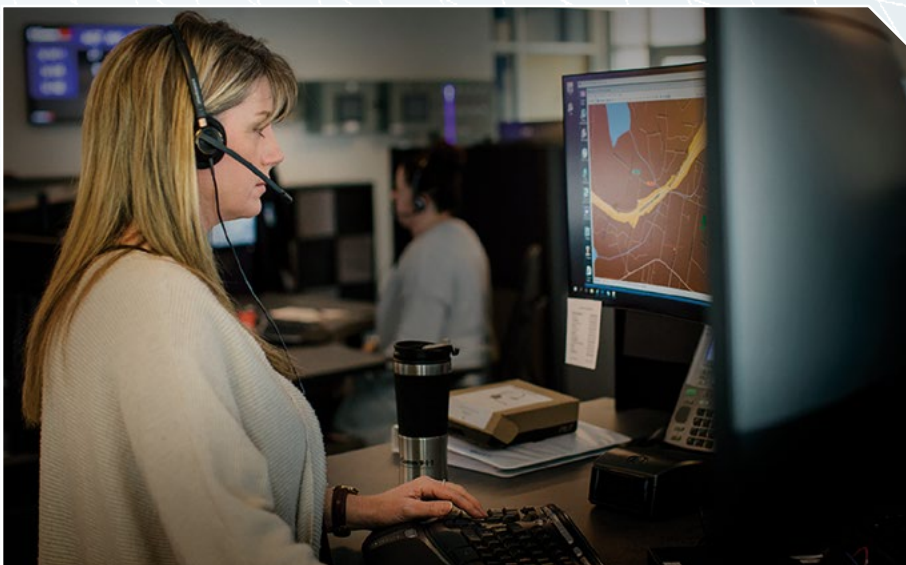


## Expanding Services

In terms of expanding services, much of E-Comm's focus in 2018 was devoted to preparing the new South Island 9-1-1/Police Dispatch Centre for operations. Built and owned by the Capital Regional District and operated by E-Comm, the centre consolidates 9-1-1 call-taking and police dispatch services for four municipal police departments and 11 RCMP detachments on central and southern Vancouver Island into one purpose-built, post-disaster facility in Saanich.

The Capital Regional District managed construction of the 1,200-square-metre post-disaster facility. Construction began in October 2017 and was completed on time and under budget just over one year later, allowing E-Comm to install all the furniture, fixtures, equipment and technology required in the final quarter of 2018.

The South Island Centre will handle an estimated 100,000 9-1-1 calls each year, meaning that E-Comm will now answer 99 per cent of 9-1-1 calls in B.C. between its two centres. Police agencies in the region transitioned their call-taking and dispatch functions to the new centre in the first quarter of 2019.



***"The coordination between different police units is made better by having a single consolidated centre."***

**Chief Constable Bob Downie,  
Saanich Police Department**

INSIDE THE NEW 9-1-1/POLICE DISPATCH CENTRE ON VANCOUVER ISLAND.





***“By joining the wide-area radio network, we are increasing interoperability between all emergency service agencies, which ultimately means a safer working environment for first responders.”***

**Chief Nick Delmonico, Port Coquitlam Fire & Emergency Services**

## **WIDE-AREA RADIO NETWORK EXPANDS**

E-Comm’s Wide-Area Radio Network, the largest multi-jurisdictional, tri-service emergency radio system in the province, grew again in 2018 with the addition of three new fire departments. In February, Port Coquitlam Fire & Emergency Services joined the network. Langley City Fire Rescue Service made the move in April, followed by the Township of Langley Fire Department in May.

More than 30 police, fire and ambulance agencies from Lions Bay to Abbotsford communicate on the radio network, generating more than 49 million transmissions in 2018.

The purpose of the system is to provide clear, safe and secure communications for police officers, firefighters and ambulance paramedics.

## **NEW FIRE DISPATCH PARTNERS**

In the second half of 2018, E-Comm worked with officials from the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and the Regional District of the North Okanagan (RDNO) to prepare the transition of their fire dispatch services to E-Comm. With the addition of 15 fire departments in the Fraser Valley and seven in the North Okanagan, as of February 20, 2019, E-Comm is now dispatching fire calls for 40 fire departments in B.C. E-Comm has been the 9-1-1 answer point for the RDNO and FVRD since 2014 and 2016, respectively.

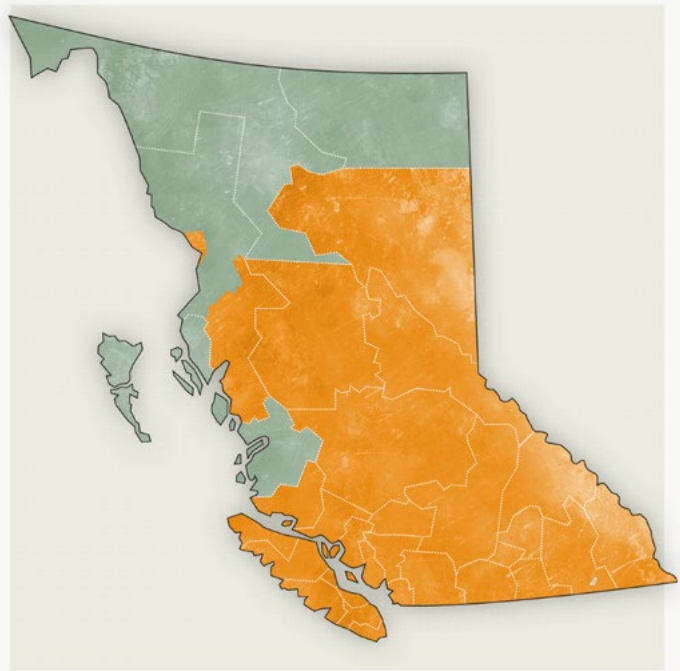


MEMBERS OF THE LANGLEY CITY FIRE RESCUE SERVICE WITH THEIR NEW RADIOS.





## 9-1-1 Service Area



**E-Comm is the first answer point for 9-1-1 services in 25 regional districts across B.C.**

## Call-taking and Dispatch Operations

From day-to-day emergency and crime situations to a brutal windstorm, E-Comm call takers and dispatchers were busier than ever in 2018.

E-Comm's 9-1-1 call volume in 2018 neared 1.6 million calls and we answered 98 per cent of those calls in five seconds or less.

In addition to answering 9-1-1 calls, our staff managed more than 539,000 police and fire emergency calls for agencies where we provide dispatch service. Our top priority is to maintain a swift call answer rate of 9-1-1 calls and those we manage on behalf of our partners, once transferred.

Quality service, timely call-answer and effective call management will all benefit from a new training facility that was developed in 2018 and put into operation in early 2019. It will also support our ongoing commitment to improving resiliency by serving as our new back-up centre for 9-1-1 and police and fire call-taking, in the event our primary call centre needs to be evacuated.

### HIGH WINDS RESULT IN HIGH CALL VOLUME IN DECEMBER

E-Comm experienced its busiest day of the year on December 20 when high winds lashed the South Coast. Whenever there's severe weather, E-Comm receives an influx of 9-1-1 calls from people reporting uprooted trees, damaged buildings and downed power lines. But on this day, the call volume exploded. Over a 12-hour period, E-Comm received 5,883 9-1-1 calls—more than twice the number of calls compared to a regular Thursday. Despite this huge increase in 9-1-1 calls during the windstorm, our call takers answered 82 per cent of those calls in five seconds or less.





## Technology Services

E-Comm and its police, fire and ambulance partners in the Lower Mainland completed the planned replacement of the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network in 2018. The Next Generation Radio Program (NGRP), a major public safety infrastructure project that began in 2013, was E-Comm's largest and most complex technology project in the company's history. Police officers, firefighters and paramedics in the Lower Mainland communicate on the radio system, which enhances clarity of communications and safety for first responders. The system now uses Project 25 technology (P25). Public safety agencies across North America widely adopted P25 for its safe, secure and clear communications capabilities.

The new radio system using the P25 technology is encrypted. For those agencies that use its encryption features, scanners will no longer be able to decrypt sensitive operational communications. Lower Mainland emergency service agencies made the decision to move to encryption to better protect responder safety and public privacy. With the completion of the new radio system, E-Comm dismantled the legacy radio system in April 2018.

E-Comm continues to lay the groundwork for Next Generation 9-1-1, known as NG9-1-1. Eventually, Canadians will use text-messaging services to access 9-1-1. E-Comm is a member of the Canadian NG9-1-1 Coalition—a group of Public Safety Answer Point organizations across the country working to prepare 9-1-1 systems to respond to evolving citizen expectations and capabilities enabled by emerging technologies. In terms of new technology, E-Comm implemented softphones in 2018. Softphones are software-based technology that allows the computer to be used as a telephone. Softphone technology offers more flexibility in our operations and supports our future expansion.

***"We've been involved since the beginning in picking the technical requirements for the new system. With these new radios, we're able to eliminate background noise so we have good, clear audio, even in a noisy environment."***

**Deputy Chief Tyler Moore,  
Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services**



MEMBERS OF OUR 2018 TECHNOLOGY SERVICES TEAM.





OUR 2018 HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM.

## Our People

People are at the heart of E-Comm and in 2018, our staff were engaged in a worthy cause over the summer as they fundraised for and rode with Cops for Cancer, in support of the Canadian Cancer Society. E-Comm has been supporting this initiative for 12 years, but this year was different. For the first time, staff were invited to participate as guest riders for a day and joined either the Tour de Coast (the Sea-to-Sky Corridor), or the Tour de Valley (south of the Fraser River). On September 24, a \$7,500 cheque was provided to the Canadian Cancer Society.

We welcomed a new executive director of Human Resources to E-Comm in 2018. Kate Dickerson, a Chartered Professional in Human Resources, brings more than 17 years of experience in leading strategic human resources teams in both the public and private sectors. Her focus is to strengthen our recruitment and retention initiatives, including developing a new process for the efficient and effective hiring of new call takers, best suited for the demands of the call-taking profession. E-Comm call takers participated in a recruitment review and partner

agencies and recruitment experts helped us define the attributes people need to be successful in this vital position.

As staff at E-Comm are on the front line of emergency services, their physical and mental health is paramount and our Human Resources team continues to support their well-being through various initiatives. We were pleased to ensure all staff were offered *Road to Mental Readiness* training sessions in 2018 as part of our efforts to bring more awareness to mental health and reduce stigmas and barriers to care. It's a program also used by other emergency services agencies in Canada.



E-COMM'S COPS FOR CANCER RIDERS.





## Community

E-Comm continued its efforts to connect with neighbourhoods, partners and industry stakeholders in 2018 through social media, local events and national and international conferences. With our participation in parades and community events, our focus was to explain how 9-1-1 works and provide British Columbians with tips about the best use of 9-1-1 and non-emergency lines.

We were pleased to receive national recognition for a public education campaign, which used 30-second radio spots to depict differences between a true emergency call and a non-emergency situation. Our campaign, *Don't Let Non-Emergencies Compete with Real Ones*, earned multiple awards recognizing excellence in Canadian advertising.

For the sixth year, E-Comm's top 10 list of 9-1-1 nuisance calls sparked attention in newsrooms and on social media as we highlighted calls that don't belong on 9-1-1 lines. Once again, consumer complaints topped the list of headscratchers. Calls on the list included:

- a fast food restaurant not being open 24-hours-a-day as advertised
- a retailer not accepting a return of shoes without the original box
- a gas station attendant putting the wrong type of fuel in a vehicle

E-Comm dispatchers participated in a new Vancouver Police Department video to help educate the public about how to survive an active deadly threat. The video takes the viewer through a series of scenarios and offers information on what to do in serious situations, such as an active shooter. Our message in the video focused on the pertinent information call takers and dispatchers need to supply to first responders attending such an incident.



40TH ANNUAL PRIDE PARADE IN VANCOUVER.

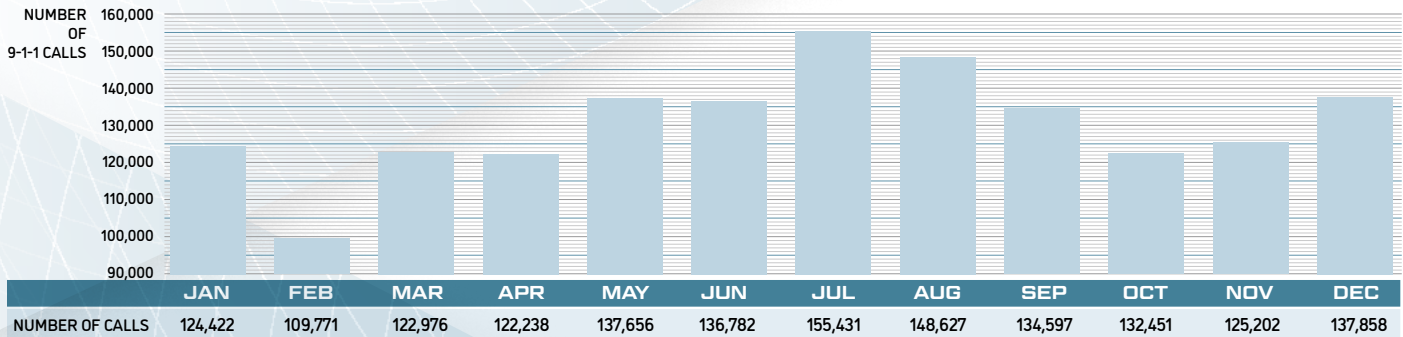


# 2018 Call Volumes

## 9-1-1 SERVICE

In 2018, 1,588,011 calls were placed to 9-1-1, with 98 per cent of them answered by E-Comm staff in five seconds or less, surpassing our annual contracted service level target of 95 per cent.

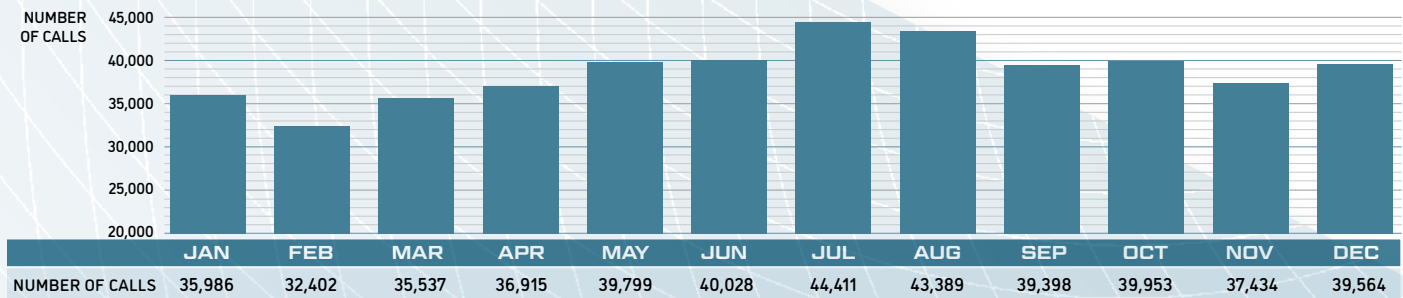
The availability of 9-1-1 service was 100 per cent.



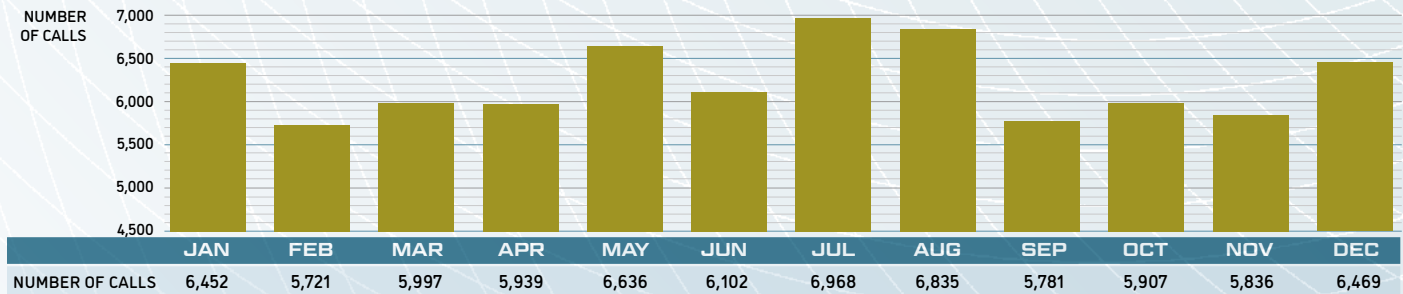
## POLICE AND FIRE EMERGENCY CALLS

In 2018, E-Comm staff managed 464,816 police emergency calls and 74,643 fire emergency calls on behalf of the agencies for which we provide dispatch service.

### POLICE EMERGENCY CALLS TO E-COMM

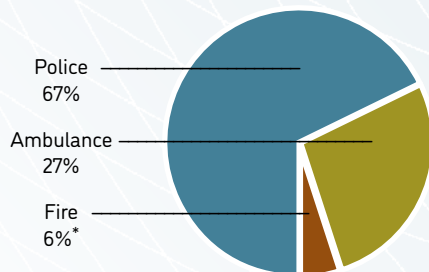


### FIRE EMERGENCY CALLS TO E-COMM<sup>1</sup>



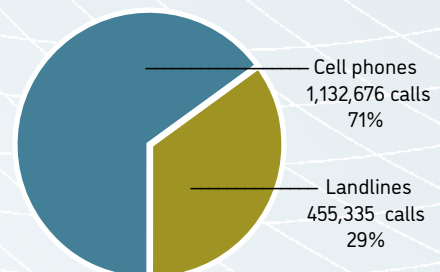
<sup>1</sup> Excludes calls for assistance from BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS).

### PERCENTAGE OF 9-1-1 CALLS FOR POLICE, FIRE AND AMBULANCE



\* does not include requests for support from BCEHS.

### 9-1-1 CALLS FROM CELL PHONES AND LANDLINES



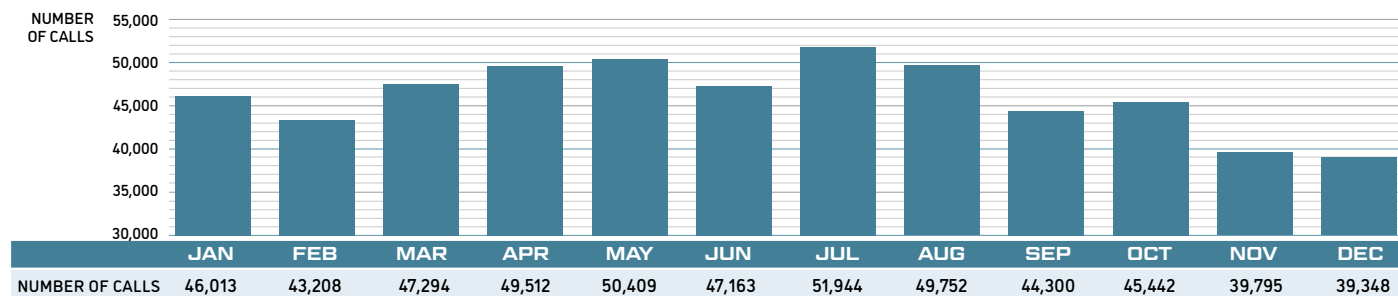


## NON-EMERGENCY SERVICE

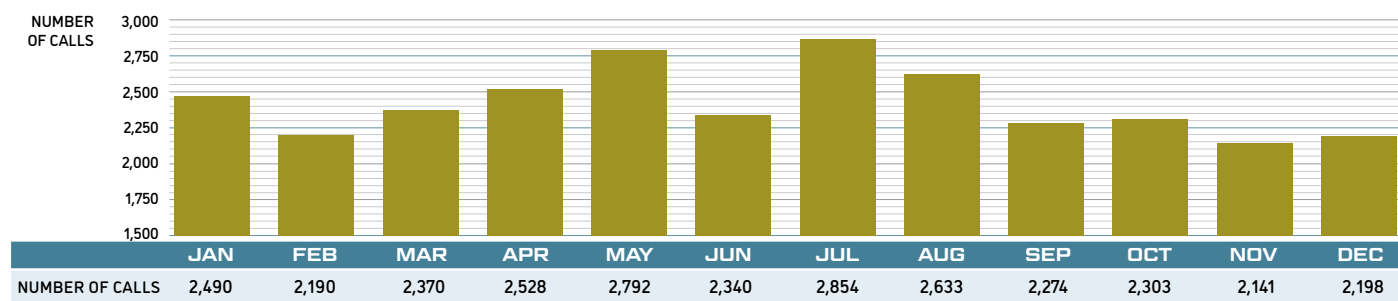
In 2018, E-Comm staff managed 554,180 non-emergency<sup>2</sup> police calls and 29,113 non-emergency fire calls on behalf of partner agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Calls placed to 10-digit non-emergency lines.

### POLICE NON-EMERGENCY CALLS



### FIRE NON-EMERGENCY CALLS



## WIDE-AREA RADIO NETWORK



Radio Transmissions: 49,274,089

Network availability: 100%

All agencies on the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network began communicating on the new Astro P25 system on March 7, 2018. The number of radio transmissions and seconds of network airtime on the new system is calculated differently than the previous EDACS system.



# 2018 Financial Highlights

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

	2018	2017 <sup>1</sup>
Revenue <sup>1,2</sup>	62,391,698	58,844,900
Direct operating expenses <sup>1,2</sup>	55,940,047	50,390,359
	6,451,651	8,454,541
Other expenses		
Amortization and other	6,176,552	5,993,927
Interest on long-term debt	647,315	1,710,967
	6,823,867	7,704,894
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses <sup>3</sup>	(372,216)	749,647
Net assets, beginning of year	2,354,362	1,604,715
Net assets, end of year	1,982,146	2,354,362

<sup>1</sup> During the prior year, E-Comm recorded expenses drawn from the radio funds collected in advance as a direct reduction to other liabilities. During the current year, it was determined that these expenditures should be reflected in the statement of operations and net assets as revenue and expenses on a gross basis; resulting in an adjustment to comparative figures with an increase to both the radio system revenue and direct operating expenses of \$1,223,065 with no impact to excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses.

<sup>2</sup> 2018 also had expenses drawn from the radio funds collected in advance; these are included in both the radio system revenue and direct operating expenses on a gross basis in the amount of \$1,206,718 with no impact to excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses.

<sup>3</sup> 2018 Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	(372,216)
Adjustment: 2018 Planned draws from surplus	(452,959)
Adjusted 2018 excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	80,743

E-Comm's overall financial results show a deficiency of revenue over expenses for the, due to a net deficit in Operations. In 2018, the Board of Directors approved drawdowns from net assets of \$0.45M to support increased operational resiliency through investment in a new evacuation site and development of a new training program. After adjustments for the planned draws from net assets, E-Comm had an excess of revenue over expenses of \$0.08M. E-Comm remains in an overall favourable financial position with an accumulated net surplus of \$1.98M at the end of 2018.

The 2018 fiscal year also included completion of all of the member agency transitions to the Next Generation Radio Program (NGRP). Further, three new fire agencies (Langley City Fire Rescue Service, Township of Langley Fire Department and Port Coquitlam Fire & Emergency Services) transitioned onto the P25 radio system in 2018.

A further planned reserve drawdown of \$1.1M was incurred to fund the remaining one-time operating expenses for completing the NGRP. Final acceptance of the Motorola radio system was in June 2018.

At year-end, management reconciled the 2018 radio levies, truing up the levies based on actual 2018 capital and operating expenditures. Actual expenditures were lower than budgeted, resulting in levy rebates to most members due to a combination of factors, including timing of capital initiatives and decreases in operating expenses, mainly in salaries due to timing of hiring. This resulted in an average radio levy decrease of 2.3 per cent in 2018 and an accumulated 2018-year-end radio reserve balance of \$5.29M.

The 2019 dispatch levy increase for 2019 was approved at 4.5 per cent (1 per cent increase over the prior year Strategic Financial Plan (SFP)), and is forecasted at 4 per cent ongoing, commencing in 2020, recognizing the increased economic pressures resulting from increased costs of benefits<sup>1</sup>, hiring, and training in dispatch operations. This ensures that dispatch operations retains a modest accumulated surplus and generates contribution (recovery) of draws from surplus within a two- to three-year period.

The total radio levy amount increased in 2019 by 2 per cent, which is less than the SFP forecast. However, the actual average levy per agency decreased by 4.3 per cent due to the expected addition of a major new Wide-Area Radio Network member TransLink (Coast Mountain Bus Company). This transition will be two-phased, with Phase 1 in 2019 and Phase 2 in 2020. Radio levies continue to provide a sustainable means of funding for technology evolution of this mission-critical asset. Overall, the financial benefits of consolidation and economies of scale continue to be demonstrated in our core radio services.

To obtain full copies of E-Comm's 2018 Audited Financial Statements, including the Auditor's Report to the Shareholders and Notes to the Financial Statements, please visit [ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca).

<sup>1</sup> Benefits cost increases include the new Employers Health Tax (EHT); Municipal Pension Plan Employer increases; WorkSafeBC rate increases and increases in extended health benefits.



# 2018-2019 Board of Directors

A 19-member Board of Directors provides governance to E-Comm and is responsible for overseeing the Corporation's strategic direction, finances and operating results.

Doug Campbell	<i>Board Chair, Independent Director</i>
Brent Asmundson	<i>Cities of Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Village of Belcarra</i>
Bill Dingwall	<i>Metro Vancouver</i>
Barry Forbes	<i>Independent Director</i>
Jack Froese	<i>Township of Langley, Cities of Langley, Surrey and White Rock</i>
Lori Halls	<i>Province of British Columbia</i>
Lois Karr	<i>RCMP</i>
Anne Kinvig	<i>Independent Director</i>
Warren Lemcke	<i>Vancouver Police Board</i>
Neil Lilley	<i>BC Emergency Health Services</i>
Jack McGee	<i>Independent Police Boards (Abbotsford, New Westminster, Port Moody, Transit Police, West Vancouver)</i>
Bill McNulty	<i>City of Richmond</i>
Paul Mochrie	<i>City of Vancouver</i>
Mike Morden	<i>Cities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows</i>
Denise Nawata	<i>Independent Director</i>
Karl Preuss	<i>City of Delta/Delta Police Board</i>
Mark Sieben	<i>Province of British Columbia</i>
Richard Walton	<i>City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Village of Lions Bay</i>
Terry Waterhouse	<i>Cities of Surrey, Langley and White Rock, Township of Langley</i>

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Oliver Grüter-Andrew	<i>President &amp; CEO</i>
Beatrix Nicolato	<i>Vice-President &amp; Chief Financial Officer</i>
Erin Ramsay	<i>Vice-President of Operations</i>
Michael Webb	<i>Vice-President of Technology Services</i>
Kate Dickerson	<i>Executive Director of Human Resources</i>
Jody Robertson	<i>Executive Director of Corporate Communications &amp; Governance</i>
Fraser MacRae	<i>Director of Police Services</i>
Dave Mitchell	<i>Director of Fire Services</i>





**E-Comm 9-1-1**  
Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property



Printed with vegetable-based inks on chlorine-free, 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

[ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca)



[YouTube](#)

