



2022

Annual Report

Corporate Overview

ABOUT E-COMM

Who we are Today

E-Comm was established in 1997 under the provincial Emergency Communications Corporations Act. As the primary emergency communication services agency for British Columbia, E-Comm has played a pivotal role in keeping British Columbians safe and helping to protect communities for more than 20 years. As the first, first responders, the E-Comm team provides a critical entry point to emergency response by working behind the scenes to connect people with police, fire and ambulance and maintaining the technology used by first responders.

WHAT WE DO

Wide-Area Radio Network

E-Comm owns and operates the largest multi-jurisdictional radio network of its kind in British Columbia. The system is highly resilient with multiple layers of redundancy to survive natural disasters of various severities. Currently, BC Emergency Health Services, all police agencies and 18 fire departments in Metro Vancouver and Abbotsford use E-Comm's radio network to communicate their essential messages.

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 computer-aided dispatch 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.

9-1-1 Call-Answer, Police and Fire Dispatch Services

In 2022, E-Comm answered more than 2.1 million 9-1-1 calls on behalf of 25 regional districts throughout British Columbia. The organization currently provides dispatch services to 33 police agencies and 40 fire departments in B.C. E-Comm's consolidated, multi-jurisdictional dispatch provides the ability to deliver top-tier technology to smaller communities and enhanced mutual-aid possibilities which greatly enhance responder and public safety.

VISION

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

MISSION

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

VALUES

Our values guide how we carry out our work. Developed and defined by our staff, we are proud of our values: Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Accountability and Service.

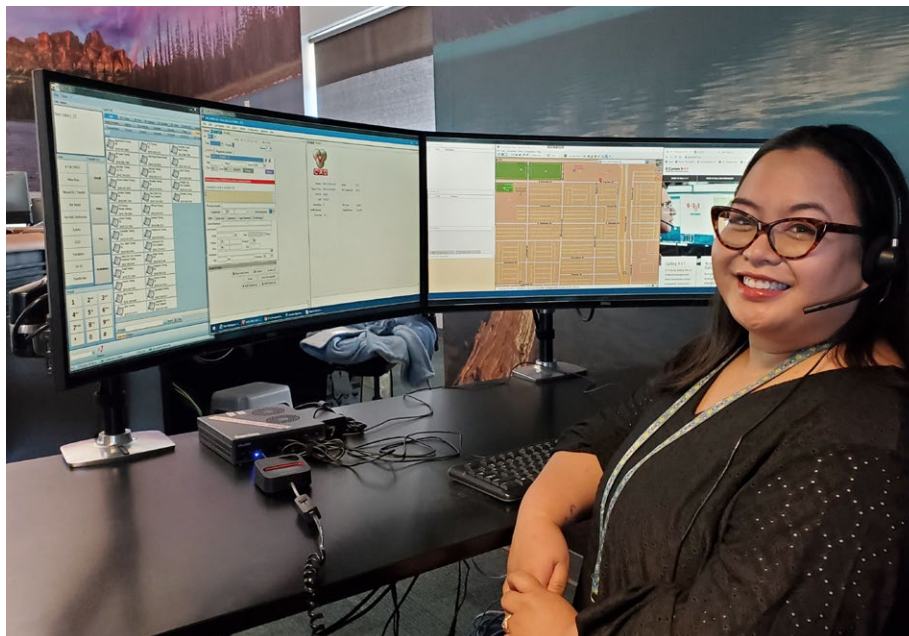


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ROUNDING THE CORNER

2022 began with significant challenges for E-Comm, our staff and partner agencies.

COVID-19 public health restrictions were still in place. Labour shortages continued to impact our staff and service levels. Call volumes remained high, after increasing to record highs in 2021. And federally-mandated 9-1-1 technology improvements were required, without funding in place to pay for them.

Through it all, our staff and leadership team worked tirelessly to stabilize our services on behalf of our agency partners, to improve our recruitment and retention, and identify the changes and resources needed to put our operations on a better footing for the future.

As a result of their efforts, E-Comm is now rounding the corner, in terms of the planning completed in 2022, the resources allocated, and the transformational work that has begun. And it's thanks to the heroic efforts of our staff who worked tirelessly each day to protect the public safety of British Columbians.

In spite of another year of record 9-1-1 call volumes in B.C., with more than 2.1 million calls for police, fire or ambulance services, our staff exceeded service level targets for 9-1-1, answering 98 per cent of calls within five seconds—an outstanding service level among our global peers. In spite of staffing challenges, we achieved our service level target for police emergency call-taking, at 88 per cent of calls answered within 10 seconds on Vancouver Island, and were very near target in the Lower Mainland (85 per cent).

However, we faced significant pressures in our police non-emergency call-taking service levels in the Lower Mainland, where we know we must do better on behalf of our agency partners.

Likewise, new solutions are required to improve our staffing levels, modernize our technology and continue to meet the public safety needs of a growing province.

To guide this work, in November 2022 the E-Comm Board of Directors approved a comprehensive, multi-year Transformation Plan and budget, to strengthen and renew our business. The plan puts in place important improvements in every major part of our business, including our staffing, operations, technology, corporate services, governance and stakeholder engagement. In particular, it includes a number of improvements to strengthen our police communications, with a focus on police non-emergency service levels, as detailed in this report.

The E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network also had another strong year. With the addition of Maple Ridge Fire Rescue in 2022, more than 40 police, fire and ambulance agencies in the Lower Mainland are using the radio network to communicate with each other.

Finally, E-Comm reached another milestone in 2022 by working with local and provincial government partners to build support for a new provincial mandate and funding for 9-1-1 in B.C. This support ultimately resulted in an announcement by the Province in March 2023 of \$90 million for E-Comm to support the implementation of federally-mandated Next Generation 9-1-1 improvements in B.C., representing a significant avoided cost for our police agency and local government partners.

It was by all of us working together as provincial, local and agency partners, over many years, that we achieved this important new funding. We will continue to depend on the support and advocacy of our partners to ensure sustainable 9-1-1 and emergency communications for the future.

We expect continued change and new opportunities for E-Comm in the years ahead. New technologies will be implemented, and new challenges will arise to test our resolve. But with the ongoing support of our staff and partners, we know our organization will remain resilient in our mission to deliver exceptional emergency communications services to help save lives and protect property.



Doug Campbell,
Board Chair

Oliver Grüter-Andrew,
President and CEO

PROGRESS AND A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Following the significant challenges of 2021, including the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, labour shortages and climate emergencies, 2022 was a year of progress, planning and renewal for E-Comm.

The organization was focused on finalizing its business transformation plan; strengthening staffing, recruitment and health and wellness supports; maintaining strong service levels for 9-1-1 and police and fire call-taking; stabilizing police non-emergency service levels; preparing for future implementation of necessary technology improvements, including Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1); and enhancing our stakeholder engagement with our government and agency partners.

These actions have provided a stronger foundation for continued progress in 2023.

A Transformation Plan to modernize operations

A comprehensive new transformation plan and budget was approved by the E-Comm Board of Directors in November 2022. The multi-year plan addresses five strategic pillars: Operations; People and Culture; Governance and Stakeholders; Corporate Foundation; and NG9-1-1. The objectives of each are summarized in the infographic.



As a result, E-Comm now has dedicated resources in place to provide structure, governance, resource planning and reporting for the improvements underway, and to ensure the organization is focused and accountable in delivering changes needed for the future.

The following is a summary of key achievements begun in 2022.

CONTINUED PROGRESS IN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

E-Comm's service performance is fully dependent on the availability, skill and experience of its people.

The organization's ongoing work to improve recruitment and health and wellness supports for staff has continued to generate greater stability and reduced attrition. In particular:

- Overall company-wide attrition decreased from 16.9 per cent in 2020, to 10.4 per cent in 2022.
- Attrition among full-time operations staff decreased from 19.1 per cent in 2020, to 10.0 per cent in 2022.



ACTIONS TO IMPROVE POLICE COMMUNICATIONS

To strengthen and improve E-Comm's police call-taking and dispatch, particularly non-emergency service results, E-Comm actively consulted with agencies in developing priorities to ensure more consistent service delivery. These include:

Dedicated non-emergency call-takers

Among the staffing improvements in 2022 were the training of 18 existing non-emergency report agents to also answer non-emergency calls. In addition, E-Comm created a new dedicated non-emergency call-taker role, with recruitment and onboarding of 22 positions completed in June 2023. This role recognizes the different skill-sets required for handling emergency versus non-emergency calls, and opens up a larger pool of potential candidates. The two measures have resulted in 40 additional dedicated non-emergency call-takers.

Non-emergency digital agent pilot

Working with the Vancouver Police Department, E-Comm developed a digital agent pilot, launched in May 2023. The digital agent is helping to improve caller experience by answering calls right away and enabling better data on reasons for calls. By helping redirect non-emergency callers to the appropriate agency if the call is not a police non-emergency matter, the digital agent will also free-up time for call takers to respond more quickly to other calls.

Standard Operating Procedure harmonization

E-Comm also initiated a review and consolidation of its 98 different "call type" non-emergency standard operating procedures (SOP) for the 33 police agencies it supports, with implementation of the harmonized policies ongoing in 2023. Harmonizing these call SOPs will help to reduce complexity and call handling time for call takers, and improve the caller experience.

Other non-emergency improvements scheduled for 2023 include changes to improve online reporting options for non-emergency police matters, as an alternative to calling non-emergency lines; and the development of a new contact centre technology-platform, to improve service functionality and caller experience, including enabling callback options and notification of wait times.

PROGRESS ON A NEW PROVINCIAL MANDATE FOR 9-1-1

Other 2022 highlights included working with local and provincial government partners to build support for a new provincial mandate for 9-1-1 in B.C., including a new governance and funding model.

Municipally-funded 9-1-1 services in B.C. face a number of pressures, including growing call volumes, necessary and costly technology improvements, and coverage gaps in parts of the province. Local governments increasingly lack the financial capacity within their existing funding sources to keep pace.

As a result of outreach by E-Comm, delegates to the Union of BC Municipalities convention in September 2022 passed a resolution calling for a new provincial mandate and funding for 9-1-1 in B.C.

NEW PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1

With the support of E-Comm's local government and agency partners, the Province announced \$90 million in one-time funding for E-Comm in March 2023, to support the start-up and implementation costs of federally-mandated Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) technology improvements in B.C.

The new technology will transition voice calls to digital or IP-based infrastructure, and is scheduled to be completed by March 2025. It will enable a number of benefits for callers, including improved location-identification, real-time texting, and the potential use of photos and video.

E-Comm is grateful to the Province for this new funding, which represents a significant avoided cost for local governments, who would have otherwise had to fund these costs on their own. That said, a new operational funding model is still needed, to make NG9-1-1 services sustainable for the future.

E-Comm will continue to work with our provincial and local governments and agency partners to advance this priority.

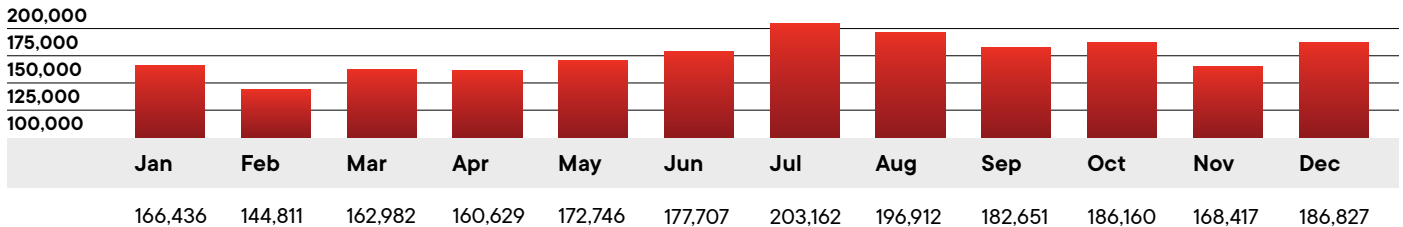


Emergency Calls

9-1-1

E-Comm continued to experience an increase in 9-1-1 calls in 2022, but the company exceeded service level targets by answering 98 per cent of the more than 2.1 million 9-1-1 calls in within five seconds.

Number of 9-1-1 calls per month



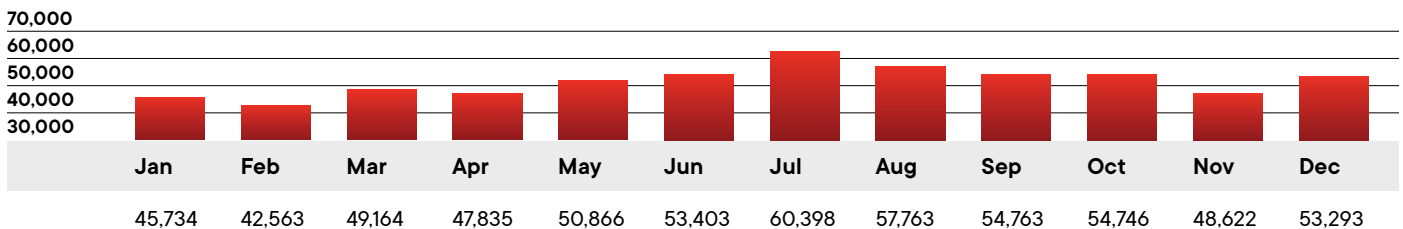
9-1-1 calls in 2022: **2,109,440**

POLICE AND FIRE EMERGENCY CALLS

In 2022, E-Comm staff managed 619,156 police emergency calls and 119,476 fire emergency calls on behalf of the agencies for which we provide dispatch service.

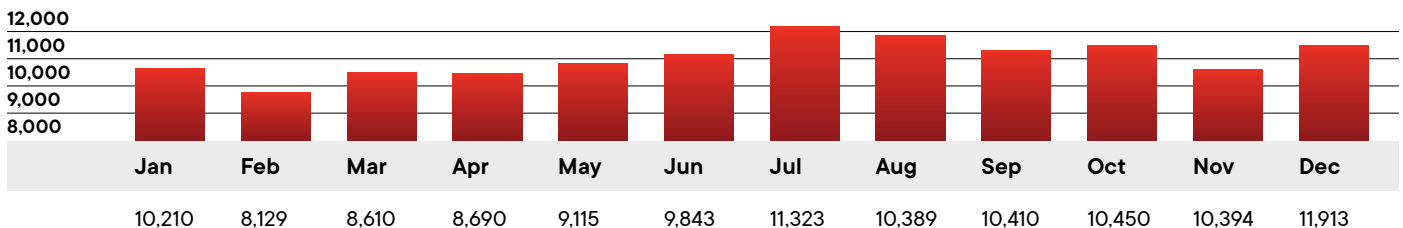
- E-Comm answered 85 per cent of police emergency calls within 10 seconds.
- E-Comm answered 88 per cent of fire emergency calls in less than 15 seconds.

Number of police emergency calls per month



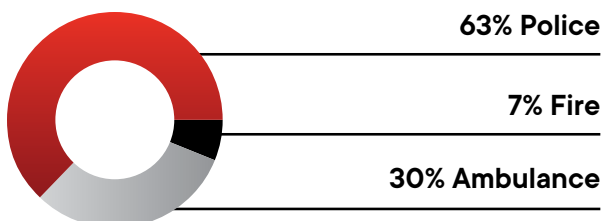
Police emergency calls in 2022: **619,156**

Number of fire emergency calls per month



Fire emergency calls in 2022: **119,476**

9-1-1 CALLS FOR POLICE, FIRE AND AMBULANCE



9-1-1 CALLS FROM LANDLINES AND CELLPHONES



20%
Landlines



80%
Cellphones

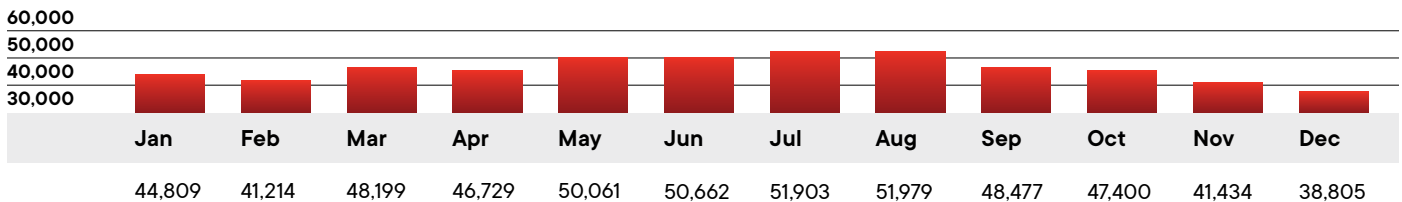
Non-Emergency Calls and Radio Network

NON-EMERGENCY CALL-TAKING

In 2022, E-Comm staff managed 561,672 police non-emergency calls and 27,017 fire non-emergency calls on behalf of the agencies for which we provide dispatch service.

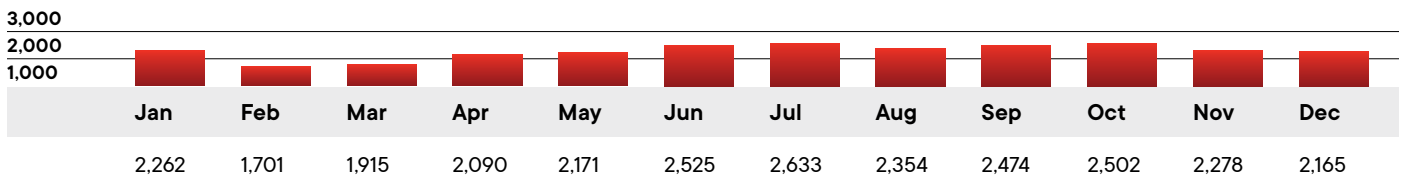
- E-Comm answered 53 per cent of police non-emergency calls within 3 minutes, and 75 per cent within 10 minutes.
- E-Comm answered 99.6 per cent of fire non-emergency calls within 3 minutes.

Number of police non-emergency calls per month



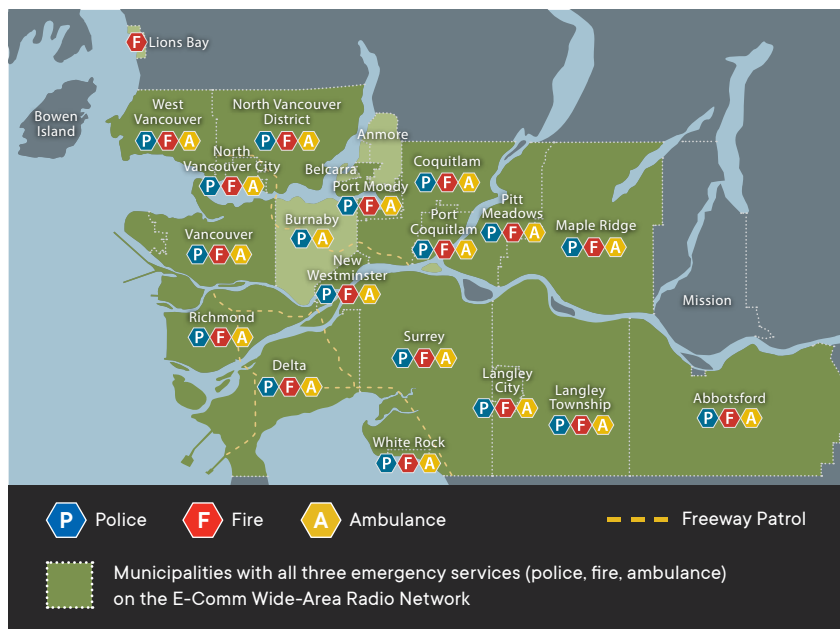
Police non-emergency calls in 2022: **561,672**

Number of fire non-emergency calls per month



Fire non-emergency calls in 2022: **27,071**

E-COMM WIDE-AREA RADIO NETWORK IN 2022



- 100 per cent network availability
- 51,935,627 radio transmissions
- 326,235,037 seconds of airtime
- 14,200 radios available to be used on the network

RADIO NETWORK WELCOMES MAPLE RIDGE FIRE RESCUE

Maple Ridge Fire Rescue joined the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network on June 28, 2022. "Radios are a lifeline for first responders," said Michael Van Dop, chief of Maple Ridge Fire Rescue. "Joining the E-Comm radio network gives us access to the best equipment and clear and reliable radio channels. This transition will have a tremendous impact on how firefighters do their jobs and their ability to keep themselves and the community safe." Spanning from Lions Bay to Abbotsford, more than 40 police, fire, ambulance and municipal agencies are using the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network.



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

	2022	2021
Revenue	97,272,686	83,497,346
Direct operating expenses	89,431,619	75,151,182
	7,841,067	8,346,164
Other expenses		
Amortization and other	6,413,118	6,307,013
Interest expenses	4,187,892	4,298,621
	10,601,010	10,605,634
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(2,759,943)	(2,259,470)
Unrestricted net assets (deficit), beginning of year	(2,680,079)	(420,609)
Unrestricted net assets (deficit), end of year	(5,440,022)	(2,680,079)

E-Comm ended the year with a deficiency of revenue over expenses of \$2.8 million and an overall deficit of \$5.4 million. As radio system revenue and other revenue lines are on a cost recovery basis, this net deficit is attributable to dispatch and 9–1–1 call-taking operations (Dispatch).

In Dispatch operations, staff recruitment continued to be challenging in 2022. The required emergency communications centre skill set mix and unfilled vacancies contributed to additional overtime costs in this area. Management continues to focus on strategies to address recruitment, training, mentoring and retention. In addition, Dispatch also invested heavily in professional services to accommodate various transformation projects.

E-Comm's Wide-Area Radio Network members saw lower actual 2022 capital and operating expenditures compared to budget, resulting in levy rebates to most members. This is due to decreases in operating costs (mainly in radio salaries and direct operating costs), better investment returns on bank accounts and MFA loan actuarial interest, and decreases in allocated costs.

E-Comm's radio, technology and contracted services continued to demonstrate the financial and operational benefits realized with consolidation, optimization and economies of scale.

In late 2022, E-Comm began undertaking a significant investment in human resources, innovation and technology projects required for the organization to evolve to meet the current expectations and future needs of our public safety partners. This work continues into 2023 and beyond. Additionally, subsequent to year end, E-Comm received a provincial grant of \$90 million from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to support the NG9–1–1 network.

The dispatch levy increases for 2023 are higher than the historical average increases as follows: 32 per cent for Lower Mainland (LMD) police dispatch; 13 per cent for LMD fire dispatch, 12 per cent for 9–1–1 call answer; and 17 per cent for Vancouver Island (VI) police dispatch. E-Comm is focused on the steps necessary to get our Operations division back on a sustainable path—financially, operationally and organizationally. Discussions are ongoing with our partner agencies to ensure we align funding with growth in volume and the nature and complexity of the calls and activities, which results in a need for increased resourcing to support dispatch service delivery and related service level targets.

The aggregated radio levy increase in 2023 is 11 per cent. Radio levies continue to provide a sustainable means of funding for technology evolution of this mission critical asset.

Full copies of E-Comm's 2022 Audited Financial Statements, including the Auditor's Report to the Shareholders and Notes to the Financial Statements are available at ecomm911.ca

Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team

A 22-member Board of Directors provides governance to E-Comm and is responsible for overseeing the company's strategic direction, finances and operating results. Management is accountable to the Board of Directors for the day-to-day operations and administration of the company. This is a list of E-Comm Board members in 2022.

INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS

Doug Campbell	Board Chair
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Barry Forbes

Nancy Kotani

Denise Nawata

DIRECTOR NOMINATED BY

Aniz Alani	City of Abbotsford
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Brent Asmundson	Cities of Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Village of Belcarra (Seat 1 of 2)
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Leanne Heppell	BC Emergency Health Services
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Lois Karr	RCMP
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Melanie Kerr	City of Delta/Delta Police Board
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Warren Lemcke	Vancouver Police Board
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Karen Levitt	City of Vancouver
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Nicole MacDonald	Cities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows
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George Madden	Independent Police Boards (Abbotsford, New Westminster, Port Moody, Transit Police, West Vancouver)
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Mary Sue Maloughney	Provincial Government
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Nancy McCurrach	Cities of Burnaby, New West, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, Village of Belcarra (Seat 2 of 2)
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Bill McNulty	City of Richmond
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Kurt Pregler	Metro Vancouver and TransLink
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Doug Scott	Provincial Government
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Richard Walton	City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Village of Lions Bay
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Terry Waterhouse	Cities of Surrey, Langley and White Rock, Township of Langley (Seat 1 of 2)
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Colin Watson	Capital Regional District and E-Comm's Southern Vancouver Island police agency partners
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Ed Wolfe	Cities of Langley, Surrey and White Rock, Township of Langley (Seat 2 of 2)
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EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Oliver Grüter-Andrew	President & CEO
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Al Horsman	Vice-President & Chief Financial Officer
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Dave Cunningham	Vice-President, Communications and Public Affairs
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Greg Conner	Vice-President, People and Culture
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Sarah Sidhu	Vice-President, Legal and Governance
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Stephen Thatcher	Vice-President, Operations
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Tony Gilligan	Vice-President of Technology Services
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Nancy Blair	Chief Transformation Officer
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Darcy Wilson	Executive Director, Emergency Communications Centres
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Ladan Irannejad	Acting Executive Director, Data, Analytics and Decision Support
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Tracy Lim	Executive Director, Operations Support Services
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Executive Leadership Team as of June 2023.

2022

At a Glance

2.1+ million calls to 9-1-1

Average of almost 5,800 9-1-1 calls per day

98 per cent of 9-1-1 calls answered within five seconds

619,156 police emergency and 561,672 police non-emergency calls

119,476 fire emergency and 27,017 fire non-emergency calls

51.9 million transmissions on the E-Comm radio system

Police and fire emergency and non-emergency call volumes are for the 73 agencies for which E-Comm provides dispatch services.

ecomm911.ca

