



For Immediate Release – September 17, 2015

Central Vancouver Island 9-1-1 call-answer service transitioning to E-Comm

Nanaimo, B.C.—Commencing November 17, 2015, emergency 9-1-1 calls from Central Vancouver Island will be answered by E-Comm, the emergency communications centre located in Vancouver.

E-Comm is a 9-1-1 Primary Public-Safety Answer Point (PSAP) — the first point of contact for 9-1-1 callers. When a caller dials 9-1-1, their call is answered by E-Comm staff who quickly transfer the caller to the agency they request. In the Central Island 9-1-1 partnership, calls will continue to be transferred by E-Comm to dispatch centres located in Nanaimo (fire), Courtenay (police) and Victoria (ambulance). The change to E-Comm will have no impact on the public's experience when dialling 9-1-1.

The City of Nanaimo and the Regional Districts of Nanaimo and Cowichan Valley, who jointly own the Central Island 9-1-1 system, recently determined through an independent study that transferring the PSAP portion of 9-1-1 response will not only result in considerable cost savings for the Central Island partnership, but also provide access to additional staffing resources and the necessary expertise to satisfy current and future technical requirements for 9-1-1.

“The study concluded that E-Comm has the ability to handle large spikes in incoming 9-1-1 call volume due to the size of the centre and its staffing model,” says Mike Dietrich, Nanaimo’s Manager of Police Support Services. “Combined with its built-in redundancies, we agree that E-Comm provides the best option for the Central Island 9-1-1 partnership both technically and operationally, particularly as the overall 9-1-1 system in Canada evolves in the future,” he added.

The Central Island 9-1-1 partnership covers an area that includes the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the City of Nanaimo, the District of Lantzville and the Regional District of Nanaimo’s Electoral Areas A, B and C.

Following the official cutover to E-Comm in November, the City and Regional Districts will join 23 other regional districts and communities who currently partner with E-Comm for 9-1-1 call-answer services.

E-Comm is located in a purpose-built facility designed to resist a major earthquake and be self-sufficient for 72 hours. E-Comm currently manages approximately 1.25 million 9-1-1 emergency calls each year from across British Columbia. Its service is 24/7, 365 days a year and has a number of back-up provisions to ensure the continuity of 9-1-1 call answer services in a variety of scenarios.

“E-Comm staff have managed more than 15-million incoming 9-1-1 calls in our 16-years of service,” says David Guscott, E-Comm President and CEO. “We are committed to ensuring residents of the Central Island continue to receive high-quality, responsive services 24-hours a day.”

E-Comm is the Primary Public Safety Answer Point (PSAP) for 23 regional districts and other communities spanning from Vancouver Island to the Alberta and U.S. borders, to north of Prince George and is the largest 9-1-1 call centre in British Columbia. E-Comm also provides dispatch services to 33 police and fire departments and operates the largest multi-jurisdictional, tri-service emergency radio system in the province.

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