

WASILLA
POLICE
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City of Wasilla

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Bert L. Cottle
Mayor



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Chief of Police

MatCom Public Safety
Dispatch



Ruthan Josten
Lieutenant

PRESS RELEASE

On 11/30/2018 at 0828 hours, there was a magnitude 7.0 earthquake with an epicenter inside the heavily populated Mat-Su Borough. During this time and the hours that followed, MATCOM Public Safety Dispatch was inundated with both emergency and non-emergency requests for service. MATCOM is the primary public safety answering point for 9-1-1 calls and emergency response coordination within the Mat-Su Borough.

At the time of the quake the communications center was at normal staffing. The dispatchers showed remarkable dedication to the community and first responders that they are responsible for. They disregarded the fact that ceiling tiles parts of the ventilation system had fallen above and around them; without regard for their own safety and not knowing the status of their own loved ones they went above and beyond to continue their response to a community in chaos.

Within the 30 minutes that followed, a number of MATCOM dispatchers responded to the communications center of their own accord without the need to be called in, knowing that their community needed them. The breakdown of their workload is as follows:

FIRST 30 MINUTES

Total 9-1-1 Calls Received: 89
Total Non-Emergent Calls: 68
Total Calls Processed: 157
Average Call Length: 2:10 (2 Min, 10 Sec)

Total Fire/EMS Calls Dispatched: 21
Total Law Enforcement Calls Dispatched: 20
Total Incidents Dispatched: 41

Among these calls for service processed within the first 30 minutes after the earthquake, included 8 gas leaks, 6 medical responses, a structure fire, a motor vehicle collision with injuries, and numerous intrusion, glass break, and panic alarm activations.

FIRST 60 MINUTES

Total 9-1-1 Calls Received: 133
Total Non-Emergent Calls: 99
Total Calls Processed: 232
Average Call Length: 1:56 (1 Min, 56 Sec)

Total Fire/EMS Calls Dispatched: 38
Total Law Enforcement Calls Dispatched: 59
Total Incidents Dispatched: 97

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Among these calls, in combination with the above referenced call details, were 8 additional gas leaks, 2 additional structure fires, 5 additional medical responses, as well as law enforcement responding to 20+ schools and other child care facilities for safety and security checks.

FIRST 12 HOURS

Total 9-1-1 Calls Received: 288

Total Non-Emergent Calls: 466

Total Calls Processed: 754

Average Call Length: 1:50 (1 Min, 50 Sec)

Total Fire/EMS Calls Dispatched: 120

Total Law Enforcement Calls Dispatched: 294

Total Incidents Dispatched: 414

It is duly recognized that during these initial hours following such a catastrophic incident, MATCOM held the average delay to answer incoming calls to a minimal. This type of call volume is remarkably high, and the fact that these calls were answered, processed, and dispatched in such an incredibly efficient manner is due foremost to the dedicated 9-1-1 professionals that serve our community. Additional emergency resources that responded to help provide this outstanding service include Wasilla Police Department's IT support, ProComm Alaska, microDATA NG 9-1-1 Support, Central Square (TriTech Software), MTA, and Priority Dispatch Corp who all extended assistance to back up essential servers, re-establish lost connections, provide additional phone lines, and offer extra support in any way possible to keep our community's 9-1-1 system functioning properly.

MATCOM is honored to work among the incredible agencies, and grateful for the expedited responses of Wasilla Police, Alaska State Troopers, Mat-Su Borough Emergency Medical Services, Mat-Su Borough Fire/Rescue Services, State Emergency Operations Center, and the City of Palmer which all displayed the highest level of professional conduct and were able to streamline response to those who needed it most.

We appreciate everything each and every one of our dispatchers do every day and thank the emergency response community for their support during this major natural event.

Gene Belden

Chief of Police

Wasilla Police Department