E-Comm Quarterly Newsletter

Reduced (btu) Emissions (Lbs) Spring
Reduced (Gallons)

British Columbia. Currently, the network processes approximately 7.8 million radio transmis-
sions each month.

The total radio fleet consists of 12 mobiles and 35 portables which are now deployed
among the three fire halls serving New Westminster. Dispatching currently takes place from
the E-Comm Radio Maestro Consoles, but is scheduled to move
into E-Comm in 2005. More than 5,400 wide-area radios are now active throughout southwest
British Columbia. Currently, the network processes approximately 7.8 million radio transmis-
sions each month.

Thanks to everyone involved who helped make this transition a success!

Number of 9-1-1 Calls Placed to E-Comm in 2004
includes abandoned calls

January ....................... 99,709
February ..................... 97,533
March .......................... 103,405

Number of 9-1-1 Calls Placed to E-Comm
includes abandoned calls

January ....................... 98,056
February ..................... 93,966
March .......................... 101,575
April ............................. 101,708
May .............................. 104,444
June ............................. 107,802
July .............................. 114,435
August ........................ 115,500
September ................... 107,259
October ........................ 110,969
November .................... 98,973
December ..................... 104,017
TOTAL ........................ 1,258,824

New Westminster is the seventh municipality in the GVRD to have all three of its emergency
services on the shared radio system.

E-Comm Staff Honoured

At the February E-Comm Board of Directors meeting, call-taker Kelly McGrath and IT
technician Kapila Jayaweera were acknowledged during a special presentation for their out-
standing efforts over the Christmas holidays.

Kelly truly exemplified the holiday spirit by initiating a collection fund for a dis-
traught family that had their house broken into on Christmas Eve. In the end a total of $800 was raised for gifts for the family, and an additional $500 was donated to Ronald
McDonald House.

Kapila also organized a company-wide fundraising effort in December, which resulted in more than $700 in
funds and hundreds of dollars worth of much needed medical supplies for the victims of the Southeast Asia
tsunami. In total, E-Comm employ-
ees donated $6,769.46 towards the
Canadian Red Cross Asia Earthquake and Tsunami Relief fund.

jody.robertson@ecomm.bc.ca Ph 604 215-4956 Fax 604-215-4933
jasmine.bradley@ecomm.bc.ca Ph 604 215-4977 Fax 604-215-4933

For more information visit www.ecomm.bc.ca

April 10:00am with the first call—a Combined Event—being dispatched at 10:12am.

The E-Comm radio network replaces the outdated UHF conventional radio sys-
tem previously used by the firefighters.

New Westminster is now the seventh municipality in the GVRD to have all three of its emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) on the shared radio system (the others include Vancouver, Richmond, Port Moody, Surrey, Delta and White Rock). This will allow local emergency responders to commu-
nicate directly with each other and with their counterparts in other commu-

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Contact 604-215-4877 to receive a copy.

3. What if I don’t know what service I need?

If a caller is unsure of what service they need, the E-Comm 9-1-1 call-taker is trained to
ask a few quick questions to help determine which agency is required and will connect the
caller accordingly.

4. What happens if I dial 9-1-1 accidentally?

The best thing you can do is just tell us. If you hang up, then our call-takers must now take the
time to call you back to confirm you are okay. If you dial us by mistake, you will not be
charged a fee, so there is no need to be concerned.

5. What special services does E-Comm provide?

E-Comm has access to a 24-hour translation service available in 144 languages. E-Comm is also a leader in providing 9-1-1 call response to members of the deaf and hard of hearing
community who use TeleTyprwriters (TTY) to access police, fire and ambulance.

E-Comm’s 2004 Annual Report will be available after May 5, 2005 in
both hard copy or online at www.ecomm.bc.ca

Contact 604-215-4877 to receive a copy.

E-Comm is committed to the use of environmentally responsible papers. By choosing 100% post-consumer recycled
fiber instead of virgin paper for this printed material the following savings to our natural resources were realized:

0.5 292.93 45.7 710.06 430.72 88.62

This newsletter is produced by E-Comm Corporate Communications. For
more information on E-Comm or to comment on a story featured in
this newsletter contact Judy Atkinson or Jasmine Bradley at:

EC300 Apr 05

www.ecomm.bc.ca

Visit our website: www.ecomm.bc.ca

E-Comm’s Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2005

INSIDE

9-1-1 is the Number Part II - E-Comm Staff Honoured

9-1-1 Stats

Meet the E-Comm Board

Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

On December 14, 2004 the City of New Westminster further enhanced the communication capability of its emergency responders by transitioning its fire
service to the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio System. The transition occurred at 10:00am with the first call—a Combined Event—being dispatched at 10:12am.

The E-Comm radio network replaces the outdated UHF conventional radio sys-
tem previously used by the firefighters.

New Westminster is now the seventh municipality in the GVRD to have all three of its emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) on the shared radio system (the others include Vancouver, Richmond, Port Moody, Surrey, Delta and White Rock). This will allow local emergency responders to commu-
nicate directly with each other and with their counterparts in other communi-
ties that also use the E-Comm system. This is critical on both a day-to-day basis
and in a major emergency or disaster. The New Westminster Police Service and the
BC Ambulance Service have been on the system for more than two years.

Equally important, New Westminster Fire/Rescue Services will also be able
to now communicate directly with fire departments in Surrey, Richmond and Delta, all of which have mutual-aid agreements with New Westminster.

Mayor Wayne Wright summed up the move as “Good news all around.
This important step enhances the delivery of emergency services with a
superior communication system that improves firefighter safety and without
doubt, provides better service to our citizens and visitors to New Westminster.

In addition to the ability to directly communicate with other emergency
responders both in and outside of New Westminster, the E-Comm radio sys-
tem offers enhanced personnel safety (emergency buttons), better in-building

L-R:  David Korbin (Chair, E-Comm Board of Directors), Kelly McGrath, Ken Shymanski (E-Comm President & CEO) and Kapila Jayaweera.

“Operationally it makes absolute sense for us. Interoperability and increased building coverage are two significant features that will help us complete our response more effectively, but more important, keeps firefighters safer. That means enhanced public safety for New Westminster.”

Fire Chief Carl Nospatd

Story continued, see “New West” ⌂
The speed with which consumer technology changes in the world of emergency communications poses many challenges for call centres around the world. Often we find ourselves striving to keep up with the technological purchases of consumers who forget that 9-1-1 technology is inevitably impacted by their use of this technology.

The commonality of cell phones as a means of communication has had both positive and negative impacts on 9-1-1. While cellular phones significantly increase the public’s ability to call 9-1-1 and thereby assist in the delivery of life-saving services, they also present a number of challenges. These unintentional or ‘dropped’ calls are an estimated 500,000 cell phone users in the GVRD alone. While a cell phone number is no longer presented to call-takers as a valid format, it still may be necessary to verify that what appears to be a 9-digit number is indeed a one-digit 9.

In the last issue of E-Communiqué we took an in-depth look at the world of 9-1-1—how the technology, several critical operational issues and to Port Moody. That commitment no doubt played a part in the City capturing first place in the International Planning for the Future award (beating out such competitors as Honolulu, Seattle and Camden, Australia) and third place for the most livable city in the world! Both awards are presented by the International Awards for Livable Communities.

Recently, the GVRD alone). Also, while a cell phone number is no longer presented to call-takers as a valid format, it still may be necessary to verify that what appears to be a 9-digit number is indeed a one-digit 9.

In order to eliminate long-distance phone charges, an increasing number of people are using their high-speed internet connection to make calls and help to replace the landline phones. However, in some cases VoIP is currently not capable of dialing 9-1-1 or alternatively the calls come in on a non-emergency ten digit line. Also, there are ongoing issues in determining the VoIP caller’s location and ensuring that they are directed to the correct 9-1-1 centre. What this means is that if you live in Vancouver and call 9-1-1 from your laptop while traveling in Toronto, your call could end up at E-Comm and not the Toronto centre. If you are considering using VoIP as your primary method of communication, you need to be aware of these issues.

Organizations such as APCO Canada (Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials) and NENA (National Emergency Number Association) are working together to reach an agreement on how VoIP and 9-1-1 interact. Through collaborative efforts, the public safety industry will be able to gain a better understanding of where the technology is headed and how the industry will be affected. E-Comm is keeping abreast of VoIP developments through its association with both APCO and NENA.

FAQs:
How is it 9-1-1 funded? The 9-1-1 service is contracted to E-Comm by the Emergency Management Services District (GVRD). The GVRD collects for this service from each municipality in this region through property taxes and then remits payment to E-Comm.

What has been the biggest challenge in reaching your ‘ultimate goal’? What are some of the notable achievements?

E-Comm has helped with that. It’s very important and I know Coquitlam has had good, positive results with its involvement. We are enthusiastic about the radio system and all it has to offer for shared communications. Let’s face it; it would be foolish to be an island by itself, but I have no doubt that sharing is the future. Coquitlam is second to none and a critical component to our overall emergency plan.

What is your favourite thing about E-Comm and how it is managed and what’s been accomplished so far? Take example E-Comm radio system is a huge success but I also think that 9-1-1 best operate.

There have been bumps along the way? What are some of the notable achievements?

The biggest challenge has been the speed with which this project has been put together. It has been so fast for such a massive undertaking, and yet it’s been very successful in many respects. It takes any company 6-7 years to fully operationalize, to get all the bugs out and to get profitable. A post-disaster building has been erected, an entire radio system has been engineered and rolled out, 9-1-1 has been streamlined and more than a dozen different police and fire departments have moved their dispatch operations to E-Comm. And people are surprised there have been bumps along the way?

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