

51. City of Houston 911 Production Server System Platform, Houston, Texas, Pioneer Technical Documentation, April 30, 2002
52. HEC Project Sign-in Sheets
 - a. Functional Design Session, November 13, 2001
 - b. Functional Design Review, January 7, 2002
 - c. Functional Acceptance Test – CAD, February 3, 2003
53. Policy to Direct and Monitor Technology Efforts, November 25, 2002
54. Commission on State Emergency Communications, Best Practices for Basic 911 System Training, Training Manual
55. HEC Status 3/25/03, 4/3/03, 4/10/03, 8/17/03, 9/29/03
56. Altaris Status, 9/11/03
57. Houston Altaris® CAD Call taker Train-the-Trainer Schedule
58. Alartis® Computer Aided Dispatch System and Records Management System Project Implementation Plan, December 14, 2001
59. Memorandum of Understanding – CAD Functional Acceptance Testing
60. HEC FSD Evaluation Exceptions Identified 3/29/2002
61. CAD Failover Load Test Report, July 15-16, 2003, Performance Certification
62. HEC Policies and Procedures, January 20, 2005
63. Altaris® CAD Programmer Training Materials
64. Altaris® CAD Call Taker and Dispatch Training Manuals
65. Altaris® Cad Initial System Configuration
66. Altaris® CADLIVE, INTLIVE, MISLIVE Data Dictionary
67. Altaris® CAD and MSS As Built Documentation
68. SIRT List, All Items
69. Change Order List, All Items
70. Altaris® Computer Aided Dispatch System and Records Management System Project Implementation Plan, December 14, 2001
71. Altaris® CAD Command Statistic Report for 2005, January 12, 2005

Appendix B Operations of Call Takers and Dispatchers

Figure B-1 shows the operation of call takers and dispatchers. The Neutral 911 call takers are an initial entry point to the system. They classify a call as going to Police or Fire/EMS, or refer it to another agency. They transfer the caller to either a Police or Fire/EMS call taker, referred to as a “warm-transfer.” Combined events, those requiring both Fire/EMS and Police response, are transferred to Fire/EMS call takers. Neutral 911 call takers do not interact with the technical CAD system, but they do use the VESTA call management system.

HPD and HFD call takers are the interface to the public requesting services. They obtain, organize, and enter the information that is the basis for making resource decisions. They define the call type and priority, “coding” the call. Some aspects of the call taking requirements are explicitly incorporated into the CAD information entry system under the Special Instructions (SINS) feature, but there are marked differences between Police and Fire/EMS usage of that tool.

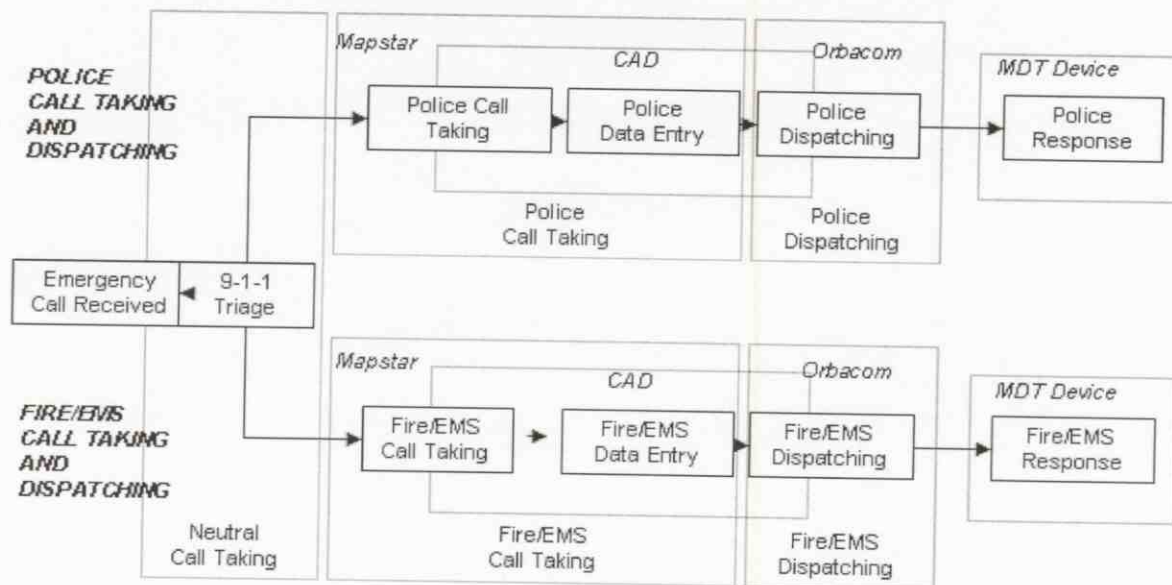


Figure B-1. Operations of Call Takers and Dispatchers

Upon completion of the basic entry of an event, the information is then passed to a dispatcher to assign, monitor, and manage a response. At this point the police call taker may terminate the call, but the Fire/EMS call takers may have responsibility for the delivery of "pre-arrival instructions," the coaching of the caller to take medical action prior to arrival of a medical unit. The dispatch operations between the HFD and HPD have important distinctions. The diversity of response possibilities is larger on the Fire/EMS side, choosing among types of equipment and possible combinations (engines, ladder, tower, BLS ambulances, ALS ambulances, Paramedic vehicles, command officers). There is automatic support by the CAD system for selection of asset combinations. The continuous service delivery from the dispatcher is limited, with no direct involvement in safety issues.

The variety of police dispatch choices are typically much more limited in terms of type of response, although some specialized unit selection is occasionally involved. Practically, if not officially defined, the police dispatchers do provide some degree of load management for the officers in the field, making certain that the load on the officer is not driven by a simple "closest officer" algorithm that might overload one officer. There is a very important continuous service connection from the officer to the dispatcher that is unique to the police side of dispatch.

The analysis of the operations against the initial system design showed major differences and expectations. The roll out of the new CAD system was expected to have minimal disruption to the police call taking and police dispatching processing. The expectation by police dispatchers was that the system would be modified to fit their existing police dispatch processes and that departmental policies and procedures would not be affected. This is consistent with the terms of the acquisition of the new system as an upgrade to the existing police CAD system. In contrast to this view, the Fire/EMS participated in the new CAD system project with the expectation that the implementation of the new CAD system would result in changes to their business processing, but like the police dispatching staff, no expectations existed for changes in the departmental reporting structure or impacts to their existing departmental policies and procedures.

The newly formed HEC organization took on the role of integrating call taking and dispatching business processes in anticipation that a single call taking and call dispatching process and procedure would be followed when utilizing the new CAD system. Furthermore, the HEC organization began to work towards standardizing staff policies and procedures as they saw their role as a "service organization" to the Houston Police and Fire Departments with overall responsibility and accountability for Houston's Emergency Services' call taking and dispatching functions.

