

Public Safety Dispatchers

Inland Empire/Desert Region (Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Metropolitan Statistical Area)

Summary

- Employment for public safety dispatchers is expected to **increase by 14% through 2022, more than 450 job openings** will be available in the Inland Empire/ Desert Region.
- The entry-level hourly wage (25th percentile) for public safety dispatchers is **above the MIT Living Wage estimate of \$12.30 per hour** for a single adult living in the Inland Empire/Desert Region.
- While there is projected demand for this occupation over the next five years, it is unclear if there is an opportunity for program growth or development due to the fact that there is no known instructional program for public safety dispatchers in the region. Consult with the department's advisory board and local employers to confirm this report's findings and for further employer job demand.

Introduction

Police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers are commonly referred to as public safety dispatchers or 911 operators. They work in settings related to public safety—police stations, fire stations, or hospitals, and primarily handle emergencies reported by the public via telephone. Typically, employers of these dispatchers require completion of the 120-hour P.O.S.T. certified public safety dispatchers' basic course within the first 12 months of employment. See the resources section on page six for more details regarding this course as well as the trainers that provide it.

For the remainder of this report, police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers will be referred to as public safety dispatchers, since that is the official name of the training in California. The corresponding definition/description, sample job titles, education and training requirements, as well as the community college educational attainment of current public safety dispatchers appears below:



Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers (43-5031)

Operate radio, telephone, or computer equipment at emergency response centers. Receive reports from the public of crimes, disturbances, fires, and medical or police emergencies. Relay information to law enforcement and emergency response personnel. May maintain contact with caller until responders arrive.

Sample job titles: 911 Dispatcher, Communications Officer, Communications Operator, Communications Specialist, Communications Supervisor, Dispatcher, Emergency Communications Operator (ECO), Police Dispatcher, Public Safety Dispatcher, Telecommunicator

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: High school diploma or equivalent

Training Requirement: One to twelve months on-the-job training

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Credential or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 47%

Job Opportunities

In 2017, there were nearly 750 public safety dispatchers jobs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. Across the region, employment related to this occupation is expected to increase by 14% through 2022. Employers will need to hire more than 450 workers over the next five years to fill new jobs and to backfill jobs that workers are leaving – including retirements. Exhibit 1 displays the projected growth for public safety dispatchers in the region.

Exhibit 1: Five-year projections for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region

Occupation	2017 Jobs	5-Yr % Change (New Jobs)	5-Yr Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	% of workers age 55+
Public Safety Dispatchers	747	14%	455	91	17%

Source: EMSI 2018.3

Over the last 12 months (September 2017 to August 2018), there were 83 advertisements (ads) for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. The average time to fill for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region is about two days longer than the nation as a whole. This indicates that it is only somewhat more difficult for a local employer to find qualified candidates to fill their open positions than it is nationally. Exhibit 2 shows the number of job ads posted during the last 12 months along with the regional and national average time to fill for public safety dispatchers.

Exhibit 2: Employer job ads and time to fill for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region during the last 12 months, September 2017 – August 2018

Occupation	Job Ads	Regional Average Time to Fill (Days)	National Average Time to Fill (Days)
Public Safety Dispatchers	82	33	31

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Earnings

The entry-level wage for public safety dispatchers is above the MIT Living Wage estimate of \$12.30 per hour, or \$25,584 annually for a single adult living in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. This entry-level wage is also sufficient for two adults and one child (\$14.50 per hour, per adult or \$30,160 annually for each adult). See Exhibit 3 for wage information.

Exhibit 3: Earnings for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region

Occupation	Entry to Experienced Hourly Earnings Range*	Median Wage*	Avg. Annual Earnings
Public Safety Dispatchers	\$24.63 to \$36.33	\$28.79	\$58,100

Source: EMSI 2018.3

*Entry Hourly is 25th percentile wage, the median is 50th percentile wage, experienced is 75th percentile wage.

Work Locations, Employers, Skills, Education, and Certifications

Exhibit 4 displays the top employers posting job ads for public safety dispatchers during the last 12 months.

Exhibit 4: The top employers posting job ads for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region during the last 12 months, September 2017 – August 2018

Occupation	Top Employers
Public Safety Dispatchers (n=70)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County of San Bernardino Fontana Unified School District (school police dispatcher) Arrowhead Regional Medical Center

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 5 lists the in-demand skills that employers are seeking when looking for workers to fill positions with public safety dispatchers. Specialized skills are occupation-specific skills employers are requesting for industry or job competency. Employability skills are general abilities that employers are looking for beyond job-specific skills and work experience to help drive business activity. These are often referred to as “soft skills.”

Exhibit 5: In-demand skills from employer job ads for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, September 2017 – August 2018

Occupation	Specialized skills	Employability skills
Public Safety Dispatchers (n=69)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health and Safety Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Data Entry Telecommunications Two-Way Radio Operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typing Computer Literacy Communication Skills Writing Decision Making Organizational Skills

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 6 displays the entry-level education typically required to enter each occupation according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, educational attainment for incumbent workers with “some college, no degree” and an “associate degree” according to the U.S. Census, and the minimum advertised education requirement requested by employers in online job ads. Employers posting job ads unanimously prefer candidates with a high school diploma or vocational training.

Exhibit 6: Educational attainment and online job ads with minimum advertised education requirements for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, September 2017 – August 2018

Occupation	Typical Entry-Level Education Requirement	Educational Attainment (Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College-level Education)*	Minimum Advertised Education Requirement from Job Ads			
			Number of Job Postings (n=)	High school diploma or vocational training	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
Public Safety Dispatchers	High school diploma or equivalent	47%	43	100%	-	-

Source: EMSI 2018.3, Current Population Survey, Burning Glass – Labor Insights

*Some college-no degree, postsecondary nondegree credential, or an associate degree.

Exhibit 7 displays the top certifications required by employers posting job ads for public safety dispatchers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. Not all employers requested certifications for their public safety dispatchers in their job postings, but the most frequently requested was the P.O.S.T. certified public safety dispatcher certification. Some postings

Exhibit 7: Top certifications required for public safety dispatchers by employers' job ads in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, September 2017 – August 2018

Occupation	Certifications
Public Safety Dispatchers (n=35)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California POST Public Safety Dispatcher certification Typing certification (WPM)

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Educational Programs

According to the Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI), there is only one program related to public safety dispatchers, which is offered at Napa Valley. It is associated with the police academy program, which is aimed more at training police officers. See Exhibit 8 for details regarding this program.

Exhibit 8: Public safety dispatcher programs in California

College	Program Title	Associated TOP code	Award
Napa Valley	911 Dispatcher	2015.50 Police Academy	Certificate of Achievement

Source: Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI)

Additional Resources

- California Occupational Guide:
<https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/occguides/Detail.aspx?Soccode=435031&Geography=0601000000>
- Public Safety Dispatchers’ Basic Course:
<https://post.ca.gov/public-safety-dispatchers-basic-course>
- Dispatcher Course Catalog:
https://catalog.post.ca.gov/PresenterCourseDescription.aspx?crs_no=30900&crs_title=DISPATCHER%2c+PUBLIC+SAFETY+%28BASIC%29&pagelid=10
- Public Safety Dispatchers’ Basic Course Training Specifications:
<http://lib.post.ca.gov/Publications/DispatcherTrainingSpecsOnlineformat.pdf>

Sources

O*Net Online

Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES

Employment Development Department, Unemployment Insurance Dataset

CTE LaunchBoard

Statewide CTE Outcomes Survey

Living Insight Center for Community Economic Development

California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information Systems (MIS)

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