

Megan - Saarick Fire Department

Megan has been a 911 Dispatcher for just over 3 years. She's a dedicated, enthusiastic, and incredibly skilled dispatcher who has a passion for helping people and serving her community.

In her own words, Megan provides some insights into her journey as a 911 Dispatcher.

Question #1: What interested you in this profession? Family legacy?

"I've always loved helping people. I sort of had an epiphany one day when I realized that my social circles were mostly comprised of people who feel the same way and most of them were already in emergency services careers such as paramedics, nurses, firefighters, police officers, dispatchers, and emergency management specialists. I decided to make the transition to working as a dispatcher and have found a profound sense of personal and professional fulfillment. I'm where I'm meant to be, and I love my job."

Question #2: Why do you think this profession is important?

"Dispatch is the first point of contact for emergencies, and we can have a profound effect on callers and crews responding. Dispatchers must calm hysterical 911 callers, and provide potentially lifesaving instructions, while simultaneously dispatching crews to high-stakes calls. In the midst of all of this, we must remain calm and collect valuable information minute by minute to provide to responders in the field. Essentially, dispatch sets the tone for each situation, and it takes nerves of steel to be effective."

Question #3: What do you want people to know about this profession?

"Dispatchers ask many specific questions during 911 and non-emergency calls but this does not slow down the response. We are providing critical updates, information and answers to crews as they drive to you."

Question #4: How does your family feel about you doing this profession?

"It's funny because I never asked them until this question prompted me to. I sent out the question and these are some of their responses:

"I am quite impressed with the amount of specific and varied knowledge Megan has learned to be able to handle not only the different emergency calls coming in, but also the varied procedures and processes of different regions and/or municipalities. The acronyms alone are a lot!"

"I do worry about the long hours. I would have thought that doing this type of mentally and emotionally demanding job would mean that working hours would be a maximum of 7 hours, maybe 8. Working 12+ hours is almost a double shift, each shift. Add to that the varied hours of the shifts needed to be filled ratchets up the stress levels as well. I'm concerned about the effect of the types of calls she handles – is there going to be the cumulative effect of the emotional ones at some point. I do know she is strong mentally but that's still something I keep in mind."

"This job is definitely not for everyone, but she has the type of personality which I feel is highly suited to the various demands of it. She is quick on the fly, smart, technically more than competent and has great judgement

and an innate sense of people and personality. This is a very demanding job and I'm so proud of Megan for her career choice. I know she loves it and she is, in my mind, the perfect fit for it."

Question #5: What's the greatest thing about your profession?

"The opportunity to support my community by putting my skills and attributes to work. Strong communication, common sense, compassion, a dash of humour and a little slice of adrenaline."