

## *Where Do I Start?*

Every city, county, or state will have different rules about training, hiring and observation time. Be flexible and go along with each of the different requirements. Don't be pushy or you might find the door slammed in your face.

1. Find your local dispatch center.
  - a. Look in the phone book for your local police department. Smaller cities or towns may not have a police department. In these cases, you will need to find the nearest sheriff's department.
2. Call the non-emergency, 7-digit phone number and ask to speak to a dispatch or communications supervisor.
  - a. If a supervisor is not available, ask to speak to a senior dispatcher.
  - b. In some cases, the supervisor may be a sergeant or lieutenant.
3. Tell the person that you are interested in becoming a dispatcher and ask the following questions:
  - a. Are you hiring? If not, when do you expect to be hiring?
  - b. What are the requirements to be a dispatcher?
  - c. If a typing certificate is required, where can you get one? (Some agencies will only accept typing certificates from certain companies.)
  - d. Are there training classes you can take to prepare in advance? If so, where?
  - e. Does the agency allow interested persons to come in and observe? If so, get yourself scheduled!

The hiring process is slow so start early and don't give up. It took this webmaster 18 months from the time of application until I was hired. Many states hold dispatchers to the same hiring standards as officers. This may mean any of the following requirements during the hiring process:

- Some type of test
- Oral interview (typically with a panel)
- Medical exam
- Psychological exam
- Polygraph
- Background investigation
- Interview with Communications Manager, Police Chief or Sheriff

Polygraphs and Psychological exams are looking for the following factors:

### **Moral Character**

1. Integrity
  - Honesty

- Impartiality
  - Trustworthiness
  - Protection of Confidential Information
  - Moral/Ethical Behavior
2. Impulse Control/Attention to Safety
    - Safe Driving Practices
    - Attention to Safety
    - Impulse/Anger Control
  3. Substance Abuse and Other Risk-Taking Behavior

### **Handling Stress and Adversity**

4. Stress Tolerance
  - Positive Attitude and Even Temper
  - Stress Tolerance and Recovery
  - Accepting Responsibility for Mistakes
5. Confronting and Overcoming Problems, Obstacles, and Adversity

### **Work Habits**

6. Conscientiousness
  - Dependability/Reliability
  - Personal Accountability and Responsibility
  - Safeguarding and Maintaining Property, Equipment, and Belongings
  - Orderliness, Thoroughness, and Attention to Detail
  - Initiative and Drive
  - General Conscientiousness

### **Interactions with Others**

7. Interpersonal Skills
  - Social Sensitivity
  - Social Interest and Concern
  - Tolerance
  - Social Self-Confidence/Persuasiveness
  - Teamwork

### **Intellectually-Based Abilities**

8. Decision-Making and Judgment
  - Situation/Problem Analysis
  - Adherence to Policies & Regulations
  - Response Appropriateness
  - Response Assessment
9. Learning Ability
10. Communication Skills
  - Oral Communication
  - Written Communication