

I am a retired police chief with over 50 years of public safety service. I could give you dozens and dozens of examples of why Public Safety Dispatchers are, indeed, the first of the first responders. They often handle, over the phone, incidents that otherwise would require the time consuming and costly physical response of a law enforcement officer or other public safety personnel. Through coaching an hysterical parent to give life saving CPR to an infant, to talking a potential suicidal person into accepting mental health assistance, to talking an armed/barricaded suspect into putting down his firearm and surrendering dispatchers save lives much as a law enforcement officer, firefighter or medic would do on scene.

Other states have recognized that public safety dispatchers are first responders. Oregon needs to as well