

911 Dispatcher

You are the first first responder. You answer the call, keep the caller alive, and send the right help.

TYPICAL PAY

\$58,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$42k to \$87k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Police, fire and ambulance communications centres

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
The minimum almost everywhere. Police and fire centres increasingly prefer some post-secondary study.
- 2 Build the skills they test** Months
Fast accurate typing, clear speech, map reading and knowledge of your city's geography. Some centres test all four.
- 3 Apply and test** 3 to 9 months
Written test, typing test, a hearing and voice check, a multitasking simulation, panel interview, psychological screen and a background check. Many candidates fail the multitasking test.
- 4 In-house training** 3 to 9 months
Classroom, then months sitting beside a trainer wearing a second headset before you take calls alone.
- 5 Call taker, then dispatcher** 1 to 2 years
Most centres start you on calls and move you to radio dispatch once you prove out.

Pros and cons

- + Emergency services pay and pension with no tuition
- + You genuinely save lives from a chair
- + 12 hour shifts mean long stretches off
- Trauma with no closure. You hear the worst moment and never learn the ending
- Nights, weekends and holidays for years
- Mandatory overtime when the centre is short

Optional boosts

Emergency medical dispatch. Fire dispatch and tactical dispatch. Communications training officer. Supervisor and centre manager.

Good to know

Dispatch is one of the few growing emergency jobs

Alberta's alis career service counts about 4,335 dispatchers in the province and rates the three-year outlook as hot, largely because so many current staff are near retirement.

You can deliver a baby by phone

Certified emergency medical dispatchers read scripted instructions that walk callers through CPR, choking, bleeding control and childbirth while the ambulance is still driving.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: 911 Dispatcher in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)

alis Alberta: Dispatcher occupation profile

Justice Institute of British Columbia, public safety training

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/emergency-dispatcher>



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