9 DISPATCH CAPABILITIES
YOU SHOULD NEVER BE WITHOUT

No matter the jurisdiction or location, public safety professionals are under constant pressure to do more with less. That pressure has the potential to create a situation that increases stress on dispatchers, complicates decision-making, and puts lives at risk.

Fortunately, dispatch software solutions are delivering increasing speed, efficiency, organization, and collaboration capabilities to dispatch professionals. These systems support dispatchers and responders in the field with critical information management tools, allowing professionals to focus on meeting their mission of protecting and helping people.

An effective dispatch solution should meet the daily demands of dispatch by:

▶ Streamlining operations

▶ Reducing error

▶ Improving consistency and efficiency of response

▶ Easing administrative burdens

▶ Improving interjurisdictional collaboration

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To empower your dispatch with the most responsive, multi-functional tools available, here are nine essential elements to look for in a dependable dispatch solution.

1. **Full Functionality with Automatic Number Identification (ANI) and Automatic Location Identification (ALI)**

Save time, eliminate redundancies, and reduce the risk of user error with a fully functional E911 interface that provides complete ANI/ALI information to dispatch and saves historical information in the dispatch system without the need for dispatchers to manually re-enter phone number and address data.

2. **Geographic Dispatch Mapping**

A dispatch solution that automatically plots all calls for service and enables full fleet visibility using Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) via GPS offers dispatchers comprehensive visibility and full situational awareness of their dispatch jurisdiction. Dispatchers should have the ability to zoom, pan, and point to any call on the map for real-time information, and customizable mapping layers can add even more contextual information to calls for service.

In addition, location features that offer recommended routing plans and optimal units for dispatch make proactive fleet and personnel management more efficient and effective.

3. **Immediate Access to Incident Command and Planning**

During fast-moving situations, you don't have a moment to waste. Look for dispatch software that integrates with your preplanning and incident management solution so that standard 911 calls can trigger an event plan. Dispatch centers should also efficiently execute on inbound calls with a fast, user-friendly platform that provides related information to staff during fast-moving situations.

4. Full Customizability

A fully customizable dispatch solution containing multiple modules enables leaders to choose and configure features that optimally support the work of their dispatch centers. Include exactly what your teams need, and only what they need. Design user dashboards to enable dispatchers to fulfill their duties more easily, consistently, and thoroughly, without having to rely on flipcharts or decision trees.

Plus, the capability to tag calls by incident type enables leadership to extract high-quality data to get a fuller picture of larger-scale events and to monitor trends and report on dispatch activity and response needs within the community.

5. Ongoing Incident Tracking

Look for customizable features that enable dispatch to monitor officers and responders and ensure their safety and accountability while in the field. GPS tracking, timers, and customizable alerts allow dispatchers to continuously monitor and update call information, even as they continue to respond to other calls for service as they come in.

6. Ease of Use

The dispatch software solution you need today should be so intuitive and easy to use that virtually any dispatcher can navigate with minimal training.

In addition, your solution provider should make consistent, reliable product updates based on real customer feedback, for continuous product improvements that empower continuous improvements in your dispatch operations.

The professionals tasked with responding to calls for service face enough stress and challenges in the day-to-day operations of emergency dispatch. The tools they use should make it easier for them to be effective and efficient, rather than add complexity to an already demanding profession.

7. Dispatch-to-Dispatch Transfer

Your solution should make it easy for dispatch to transfer an incident from one call center or jurisdiction to another without missing a beat, by sending the entire event to the second agency and auto-launching the report for that dispatch. This dispatch-to-dispatch transfer feature can speed response times and eliminate the need for additional phone calls or extra radio traffic.

8. Data Collection and Protection

It's clearly important to make data collection easy, but it's just as essential to protect the integrity of information logged in the dispatch system. Choose a dispatch solution that simplifies form filling by auto-populating data on related forms to eliminate redundant tasks. It should make it easy for users to upload and attach digital media files and evidence documents to reports.

Querying and pulling reports to extract metrics should not require you to create separate spreadsheets in other applications. Instead, your dispatch solution should enable you to create custom, specialized reports that meet the specific information needs of various stakeholders, including charts and graphs.

You should also be certain the software you choose gives you complete control over individual user access and permissions. Look for automatic chain of custody logging and offsite, secure, monitored data storage.

9. User Support Dedicated to Customer Success

Correct, consistent use is key to getting the most out of your dispatch solutions. Expect a kind, knowledgeable technical support team that helps you set up, use, and train dispatchers — including team members who draw on their own experience in your field. They should deeply understand the demands of your day-to-day tasks and challenges.
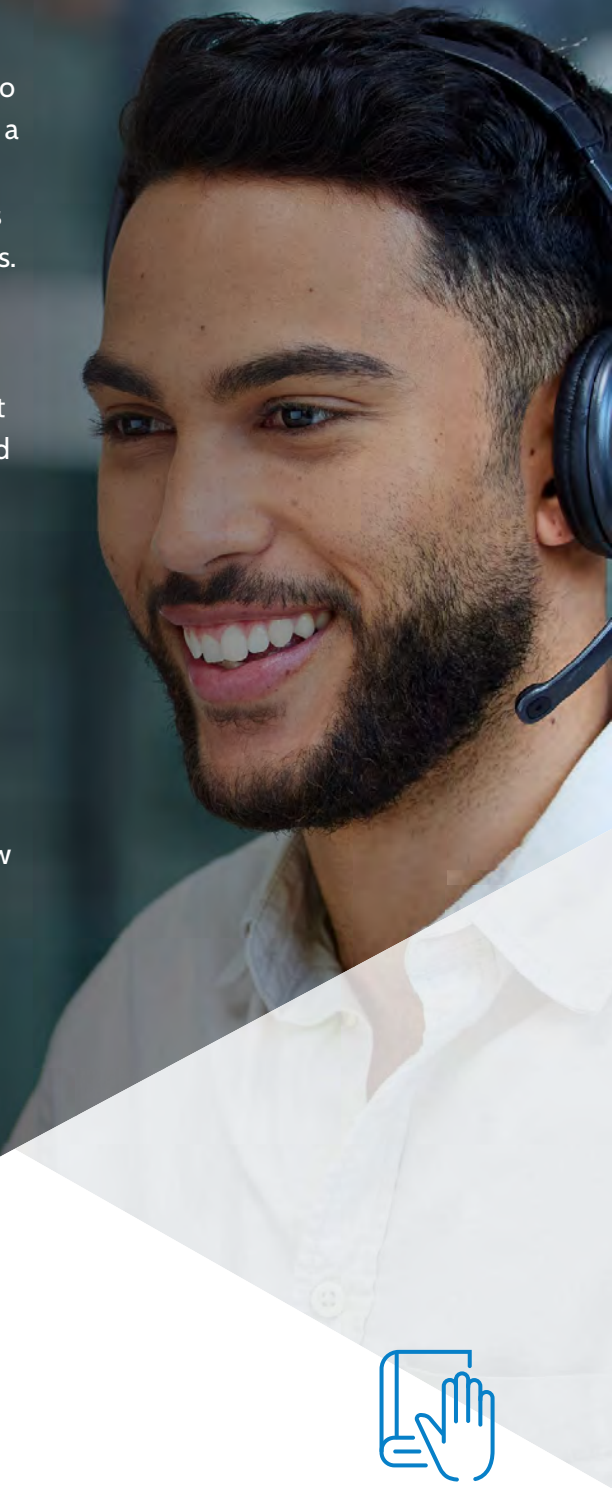
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