



E-Comm staff are excited to welcome our new partners!

Countdown to October 7 Go-Live

Preparations are well underway for the October 7, 2014 transition of 9-1-1 Public-Safety Answer Point (PSAP) services for the Cariboo, Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine and Bulkley-Nechako regional districts.

A detailed project plan covering the hundreds of behind-the-scenes operational and technical requirements needed to ensure a smooth transition, including implementation of new 9-1-1 call-routing through TELUS, has been developed. Transition progress is being overseen by a project team comprised of E-Comm technology and operational specialists with regular updates to our primary contact for the transition: Donna Munt, General Manager of Community Services, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG).

Recruitment of additional E-Comm staff to handle the regional districts' anticipated annual 9-1-1 call volume (approximately 71,000 calls) is complete and a thorough training program is already in progress for all E-Comm Operations staff. This training will help staff to familiarize themselves with the geography and many other special attributes of the four regional districts. By including all 9-1-1 call-takers in the training program, more staffing resources will be able to assist with sudden increases in call volume during a major event. This is a direct benefit of E-Comm's consolidated approach to emergency communications.

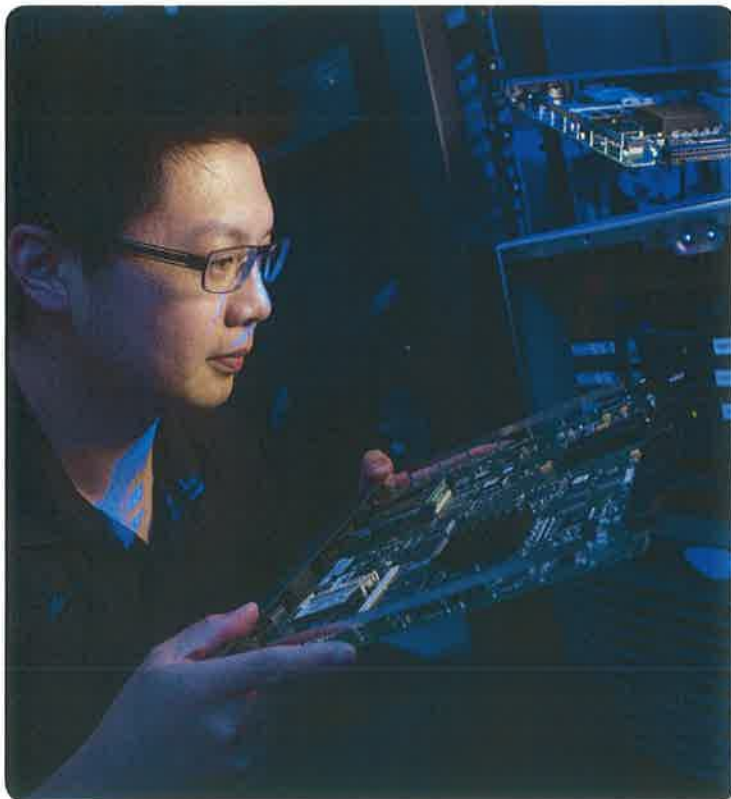
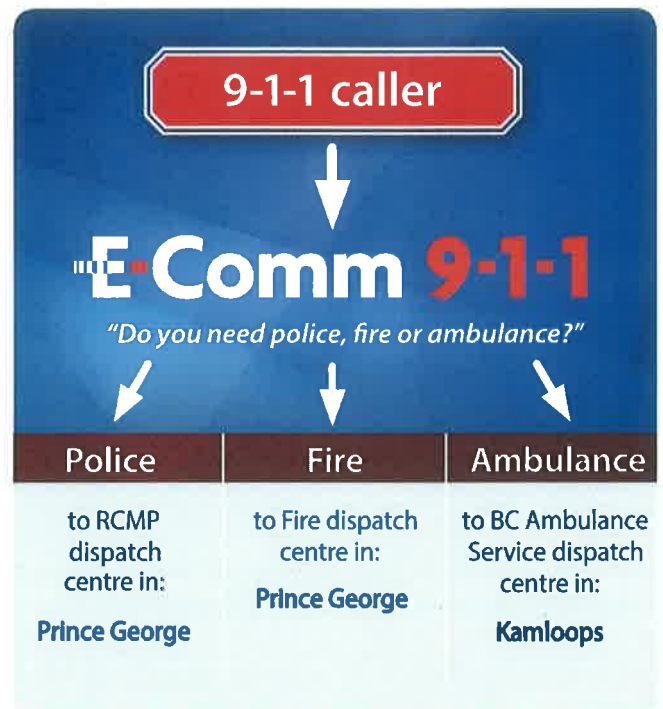
A communication plan has also been developed outlining a variety of external activities to help clearly communicate that there will be no change in how residents contact 9-1-1 following the transition. It will be important to reinforce to residents that while E-Comm will be the first point of contact for 9-1-1 callers as of October 7, they will continue to be connected to the same local emergency call-takers and dispatchers they always have been.

There's still a lot to accomplish over the coming months in order to facilitate the regional districts' move to E-Comm. Other tasks include the development of an enhanced 9-1-1 manual covering all four regional districts, testing of 9-1-1 trunks prior to cutover and revisions to E-Comm standard operating procedures. Many individuals from across E-Comm and the regional districts are working together to ensure a seamless transition.

How will 9-1-1 work after the transition to E-Comm?

Effective October 7, the “frontend portion” of 9-1-1 calls will be answered by E-Comm. This is what is known as the “Public Safety Answer Point role” or the first point of contact for callers. When an emergency call is received at E-Comm, 9-1-1 call-takers will quickly confirm which agency is required and for what location and then transfer the calls to the same local police, fire and ambulance dispatch centres that are currently dispatching these services.

This means that with the exception of the first 20 seconds or so of the 9-1-1- call in which the transfer question is posed, police calls will continue to be dispatched by staff at the RCMP Operations Communications Centre in Prince George, fire calls will continue to be dispatched by the Fire Operations Communications Centre also in Prince George, and ambulance calls will continue to be managed by the BC Ambulance dispatch centre in Kamloops.



Technology Services

Robust technology planning and implementation is a key aspect of our transition plan. Special emphasis is being placed on the engineering, design and configuration requirements needed to ensure highly resilient and redundant 9-1-1 service. With the engineering and planning components now complete, the Technology Services team continues to work with TELUS on the installation elements related to the upcoming transition. The regional districts' 9-1-1 service is also being factored into E-Comm's existing back-up plans in the unlikely event that a building evacuation is required.

"The E-Comm and TELUS technical project team is fully committed to transitioning the regional districts' 9-1-1 service with the precision and quality necessary to safeguard highly resilient and redundant 9-1-1 service."

Naomi Arita, E-Comm 9-1-1 and Technology Service Delivery Manager

Training

Although E-Comm staff will not be dispatching emergency responders or interacting with callers beyond asking what service they need and for what city, familiarizing staff with geography and commonplace names remains a priority. As such, a training program has been developed to help staff learn about the new regional districts and other information relevant to managing the 9-1-1 calls of our new partners. Approximately 544 hours of training is

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“Each member of the training team has contributed many hours to research, design and delivery of training content and have been true advocates in supporting this exciting new partnership,” says Lindsay Marshall, E-Comm Training and Development manager.

One of the most successful aspects of E-Comm’s approach to integration is found in the leadership and enthusiasm of our frontline staff who volunteer to provide support to their colleagues before, during and after a transition. In anticipation of the regional districts’ cutover in October, E-Comm’s training department will be establishing a group of volunteers to make up a special Transition Peer Support Team. Our communication centre is currently comprised of four teams of staff who work 24/7 to support our partners and each of those teams will have two members of the Transition Peer Support Team to assist as required.

The Transition Peer Support Team will:

- Receive additional training focused on geography in order to support their colleagues
- Have in-depth knowledge of regional district processes and policies related to 9-1-1 call-answer

About E-Comm

- E-Comm is the largest 9-1-1 centre in B.C. currently serving Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast Regional District and Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (south). The organization also provides dispatch services to 33 police and fire departments and operates the largest emergency radio system in the province.

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E-Comm communication centre

More About E-Comm

- E-Comm's integrated multi-jurisdictional call-taking and dispatch centre provides economies-of-scale, the ability to deliver top-tier technology to both large and smaller communities, with increased operational efficiency.
- E-Comm has some of the toughest call-answer targets in North America and consistently meets or beats those targets on an annual basis. E-Comm received close to 862,000 emergency calls in 2013, answering 98% of them in five seconds or less. This exceeds the annual contracted target of 95% calls answered in five seconds or less.

"We are committed to ensuring the residents of the Cariboo, Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine and Bulkley-Nechako regional districts continue to receive high-quality, responsive 9-1-1 public-safety answer point service 24-hours a day."

David Guscott, E-Comm President & CEO

The transition of the Cariboo, Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine and Bulkley-Nechako 9-1-1 call-answer services is a significant one for E-Comm, and one that will provide the regional districts with several benefits:

- A secure, purpose-built facility designed to resist a major earthquake (7+ on the Richter Scale) and be self-sufficient for 72 hours.
- Access to more staffing resources to manage sudden influxes of 9-1-1 calls as there is a larger workforce to draw from.
- A number of back-up provisions such as a fully equipped evacuation site that is capable of supporting the continuity of 9-1-1 call-answer services in a variety of scenarios.

For more information contact:

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Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

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