



# Position Statement

## International Public Safety Association Supports the 911 Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services (911 SAVES) Act

The International Public Safety Association (IPSA) supports the introduction of the 911 Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services (911 SAVES) Act.

**H.R. 1629** will officially classify the Public Safety Telecommunicator as a “Protective Service Occupation” in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The SOC is one of several classification systems established by the OMB to ensure coordination of federal statistical activities.

The existing classification is outdated and represents a misinformed view of the nation’s 100,000 public safety telecommunicators. In 2016, the Standard Occupational Classification Committee (SOCPC), made up of representatives from nine different federal agencies, going against comments from the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), the public, and the Congressional NextGen 9-1-1 Caucus Co-Chairs, recommended maintaining the current classification of the Telecommunicator as an “Office and Administrative Support Occupation.”

In other words, 911 call takers and dispatchers are classified as clerical workers and not as first responders. This needs to change.

The role of the Public Safety Telecommunicator has dramatically evolved over the last several years and is a critical component of emergency response. They are often the first, first responder, some examples of their capabilities include:

1. Within seconds of answering a call, they can begin offering lifesaving instructions over the phone such as CPR, childbirth, safe evacuation routes minutes before anyone arrives on the scene.
2. Acting as the first line of defense for responders and maintain overall situational awareness by gathering, evaluating and communicating pertinent information or suspicious activity.
3. Obtaining, organizing and distributing resources for significant events such as an active shooter, hostage situation, natural disaster and tactical operations.

Furthermore, the nature of this position allows for little to no closure. What was once considered to be only a stressful job, has now proven to be a traumatic one.

Telecommunicators do not get to witness with their eyes; they hear the chaos and can only imagine what has occurred on the scene. Because of this, Public Safety Telecommunicators are highly susceptible to Post Traumatic Stress. They are removed from the scene but carry substantial levels of responsibility with minimal ability to influence the outcome. They experience the same psychological impacts as all

other first responders; helplessness, fear and horror, just from a different perspective. There is almost never closure on any call.

The IPSA stands with APCO, NENA, the Congressional NextGen 9-1-1 Caucus Co-Chairs and members of the public who have passionately advocated for this change.

The IPSA will continue to monitor this situation and post any updated information or instruction on how to encourage this correction from the OMB.

**Adopted July 30, 2016. Amended April 19, 2019.**