

BRIEFING NOTE

Toronto Police Service – 9-1-1 Wait Times

June 24, 2024

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Community Safety Command
Administrative Inquiry 9-1-1 Wait Times
June 24, 2024

1. What is the service level standard for answering 9-1-1 calls?

From the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Standard for 9-1-1 Call Processing:

2.2.1 Standard for answering 9-1-1 Calls

“Ninety percent (90%) of all 9-1-1 calls arriving at the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) SHALL be answered within (\leq) fifteen (15) seconds. Ninety-five (95%) of all 9-1-1 calls SHOULD be answered within (\leq) twenty (20) seconds.”

2. Since June 1, 2023,

a. what was the monthly average wait time for 9-1-1 calls before being answered?

Month	Average 9-1-1 Wait Time (hh:mm:ss)
June 2023	00:00:58
July 2023	00:01:01
August 2023	00:01:14
September 2023	00:01:25 (longest)
October 2023	00:01:19
November 2023	00:01:11
December 2023	00:00:59
January 2024	00:00:49
February 2024	00:00:32
March 2024	00:00:21 (shortest)
April 2024	00:00:30
May 2024	00:00:34

b. what percentage of 9-1-1 calls answered each month met the service standard?

Month	% of Calls Answered Meeting Standard per Month
June 2023	33%
July 2023	31%
August 2023	29% (lowest)
September 2023	76%
October 2023	90% (highest)
November 2023	30%
December 2023	35%
January 2024	79%
February 2024	54%
March 2024	75%

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April 2024	54%
May 2024	49%

c. *what percentage of days per month was the standard met?*

Month	% of Days per Month NENA Standard Met
June 2023	0.00%
July 2023	0.00%
August 2023	0.00%
September 2023	0.00%
October 2023	0.00%
November 2023	0.00%
December 2023	0.00%
January 2024	0.00%
February 2024	0.00%
March 2024	3.23% (highest)
April 2024	0.00%
May 2024	0.00%

d. *what was the longest wait time each month?*

Month	Longest 9-1-1 Wait Time (hh:mm:ss)
June 2023	00:12:40
July 2023	00:07:43
August 2023	00:11:51
September 2023	00:12:51 (highest)
October 2023	00:08:54
November 2023	00:10:36
December 2023	00:10:42
January 2024	00:10:58
February 2024	00:07:17
March 2024	00:08:17
April 2024	00:06:32 (lowest)
May 2024	00:06:56

3. Competing Agencies and Retentions

There are a number of factors that have impact on service levels;

- **Overall staffing** – this is an industry wide issue – there is an overall shortage of people who are choosing to do this type of work and or have the skills and abilities to do this type of work.
 - **Competing Agencies** – TPS is the largest municipal agency in Canada and has the greatest workload. Smaller agencies provide better commute times, equal remuneration and lower costs of housing.

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- **Traumatic Injury** – currently **10% of staffing is off with traumatic injury**, processes for treatment, recovery and reintegration take time and members cannot be replaced during this absence.
 - **Increased Call Volume**
 - **Increases in Talk Time** due to the requirement for Public Education
 - **Capacity of Down stream agencies** – call wait times and or service capacity, this is time a 9-1-1 Communications Operator is tied up with a member of the public for a non police or collaborative response. Examples would be Toronto Paramedic Services, 211 or 311
 - **Training** – Call take and Dispatch training are done in **two segments**. There is no impact to staffing with new call takers, as they are not included in the overall staffing numbers until they are trained call takers. However, dispatch training removes fully trained call takers from call take duties for a period of **13 weeks**.
 - The final segment of training is done in a live environment with a coach communications operator. This takes a fully trained communications operator away from front line duties
 - traditionally trainees are slower in processing calls in the beginning
 - the **only full time position is the Training and Recruitment Supervisor** so the instructor team is experienced Communications Operators removed from front line duties for the training of new members
 - Communications Services partners with Talent Acquisition to complete hiring of CO's, Talent has no capacity to complete the levels of testing or interviews required to identify new hire candidates so this is done by experienced CO's and supervisory staff
 - It takes **approximately 6-8 months** to complete the layers of testing, interviews, background check and psychological assessments required of new hires, this allows for a **maximum of 2 - 3 classes per year**. Additionally, the training team is also responsible for the dispatch training, coaching and mentoring course delivery, radio training for officers, maintenance of manuals, policy updates, targeted recruiting initiatives and spring and fall in service training for current members. Juggling all of these requirements further restricts the possibility of a continuous intake and training of new members.
 - Due to training facility restrictions, there is a **maximum of 30 new hire capacity per class**. This number has increased in the past year. Traditionally the class size was capped at 20 however this comes at a cost, in that in order to ensure appropriate instructor to student ratio an additional instructor is needed for classes of 30.
4. What impacts do the answers provided to question 2 have on the ability of emergency services to provide a timely response?

Both 9-1-1 and non-emergency wait times impact “overall response time.” The longer it takes to answer and process a call for service the longer the “overall response time” will be. There are other factors in “overall response time”, for example, **availability of resources to respond** and **distance to travel**, but the call answer and process is the start of a response to a call for service emergency or non-emergency.

5. **Do wait times vary throughout the day?**

Graphs for Emergency and Non-Emergency Wait Times attached

Wait times fluctuate throughout the day, day of the week, and during special events or over statutory holidays. Call volume has a direct impact on wait times and as call volumes build, wait times become longer.

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Non-emergency wait times are more consistent and build during the day with the longest wait times being later in the day. Emergency call wait times are less consistent and reliant on evolving real time emergency events. However, call volume routinely builds and peaks during the day, decreasing into the midnight hours.

6. Were new resources allocated to the call centre in the 2024 City of Toronto budget?

In the 2024 City of Toronto budget, 3 new resources were allocated for Communications Services not specifically the call centre;

- **GIS Analyst** – required to support the Computer Aided Dispatch system and to inform data driven decisions impacting operations.
- **Change Management Specialist** – required to provide strategic support and communication managing the many projects that will impact Communication Services over the next 5 years.
- **Overstaffing of 1 Researcher for Audio and Data Management** – responsible for the supply of audio and CAD disclosure. Disclosure requests from the courts have increased 400% in the past 5 years.

In the past 7 years, there have been 3 reviews completed, one by Bell, one by Circadian Technologies and a review by the City's Auditor General. All reviews were consistent in their recommendation that in order to meet the current workload, additional resources would be required. Additional Communication Operators were budgeted for in 2018 (53) and 2023 (20). The current approved funded strength for the Communications unit is 360 and the actual strength is 336*. We continue to focus on hiring, training and retention to staff up to the approved budget.

Note – this is the total Communications Unit, less Prime

7. Are there any planned improvements for the call centre that are anticipated to have a positive impact on wait times, for example, additional resources or new technology?

Communications Services has worked with Strategy Management and in some cases partner agencies regarding Auditor General Recommendations;

- **Explore ability to reduce SEEAM calls for service** – work with Toronto Paramedic Services to explore reasons for SEEAM notification to police and to update training and articulate reasoning during notification process has resulted in a 17% reduction from 2022 to 2023 and a further reduction of 11% 2023 to May 31 2024.
- **Call Deferral for non police response**- working group has been created with 3-1-1 and Municipal Licencing to look at bylaws, response capacity, messaging to the public and managing public expectations. This is a united effort to ensure that the community knows the appropriate agency to engage for services. Part of this strategy is a long term public education campaign funded by TPS and the City called "Make the Right Call" aimed at impactful and sustainable public education focused on the re-direction of non-emergency calls from the 9-1-1 Communications Services.
- **Online Reporting** –TPS has an ongoing online reporting strategy that has updated the online parking complaint portal and is currently developing a multilingual user friendly online theft reporting platform. Further expansion is in progress. Technology that was expandable and multi-functional was developed intentionally for the ease of expansion, development and maintenance.
- **Retention of unsuccessful Dispatch trainees in a call take capacity** – currently a 1 year contract is being offered to unsuccessful dispatch trainees to perform in a calltake capacity. Allowing Communications Services the time to recruit and train a replacement for an unsuccessful member. This maintains the calltake capability, in an attempt to sustain call-taking skills, in an effort to meet

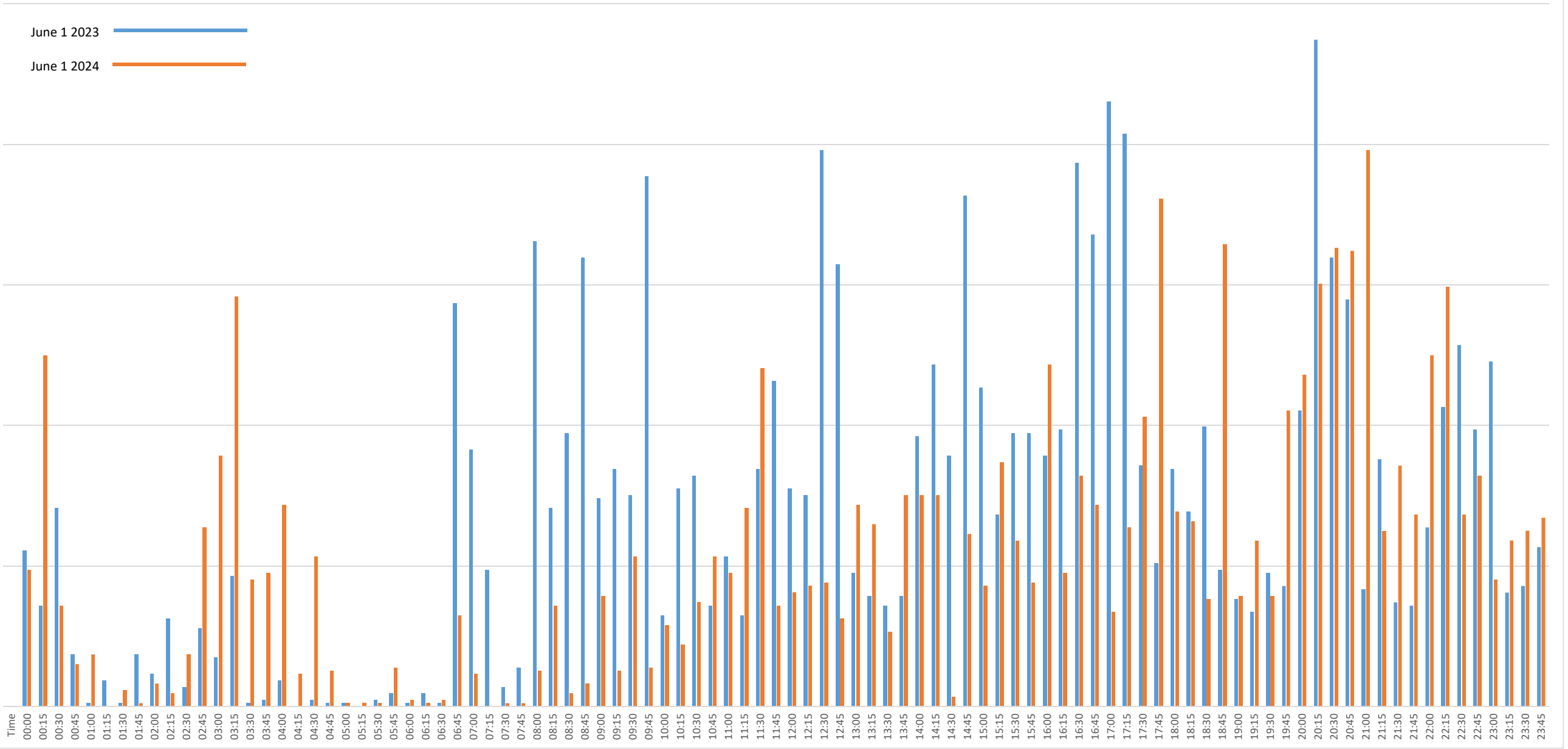
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staffing and service levels. There is still work to be done to explore the possibility of a tiered skill set for operators and the appropriate staffing balance in order to adequately maintain dispatch operations.

Outside the Auditor General Recommendations

- **Working Group created** to review recruitment, testing, onboarding and training processes. Talent Acquisition, Labour Relations, Strategy Management, People and Culture, Wellness and Communications Services are reviewing each part of the process to become a Communications Operator, including pulse surveys and feedback from members at each stage of the process in an effort to increase rates of success for candidates throughout the process and ultimately for the long term retention of members.
- **Additional Preparation for Dispatch Training-** expanding the probationary training period from 1 year to 18 months has allowed for a 6 month 8 segment training program to provide new members more time to solidify call take skills, build confidence and prepare for the expectations of dispatch training. The member feedback has been very favorable and the TPA has been very supportive of this initiative. Currently a document is being created with supporting data in an effort to make this pilot program permanent.
- **Chatbot Technology-** this initiative is in the infancy stages but its purpose is to align with online reporting and round out the options for the community to engage police services for non-emergency calls for service. This will allow for the deferral of some non-emergency calls from live Communications Operators, allowing them to further focus on 9-1-1 emergency calls for service and having a positive impact on service levels.
- **Shift Deployment Model Review-** currently the TPA, Strategy Management and Communications Services are working with the membership to look at more efficient shift deployment models that will deploy more Communications Operators daily, allowing for greater numbers of available staffing.
- **Administrative Support for Platoon Supervisors** – proposal for the addition of clerks or station duty operators to platoon staffing, aligning with divisional platoons, to free supervisory staff from administrative tasks and allow them to focus on member mentorship and training, building relationships and supporting membership in an effort to increase retention. Meeting development needs will increase member retention and maintain gains in overall staffing required to meet service levels.
- **Targeted Recruitment** – Communications Services has cultivated relationships with Colleges that offer the Emergency Communicators Course in an effort to increase recruitment opportunities. Participation in mentorship programs and job/recruitment fairs began in 2022. The focus is on recruiting and increasing the overall available staffing.
- **NG911 Technology Opportunities-** within the NG911 call handling solution there is the ability to automate some processes related to calling back hang up and pocket dial calls that will decrease time spent on call. This will have impact on call taker availability.

Emergency Wait Times - June 1st 2023 vs June 1 2024



Non Emergency Avg Wait Times - June 1 2023 vs June 1 2024

June 1 2023
June 1 2024

