



There is exciting news for Texas' 9-1-1 Telecommunicators. On June 17th, Governor Perry signed HB3823 into law, which changes the TX Occupational Code, sets hiring standards for Telecommunicators (TCs) and strengthens training standards across the state. The bill passed unanimously in both the House and Senate and **will take effect on 9/1/2011. It impacts all TCs hired on or after that date.**

A copy of the new law is attached. To understand the changes, refer to the original TX Occupational Code, Section 1701 referring to Law Enforcement. Most of the original code is still in effect. For a full copy of the previous code, go to:

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/OC/htm/OC.1701.htm>

Here are a few **FAQs** regarding the legislation:

What hiring standards for Telecommunicators are set by the law?

Persons employed as a Telecommunicator must be at minimum 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or GED. TCLEOSE anticipates enforcing the same criminal history requirements as those currently in place for officers and jailers. Agencies are free to set higher standards than these minimums as they see fit.

The language in the hiring requirements, Section 1701.405(b) (1), seems to say that to hire a TC; the applicant must have 40 hours of training. Is that correct?

No. Agencies continue to have one year from the date of hire to complete this training as stated in Section 1701.405(h). This part of the Occupational Code is not changed.

Has the definition of Telecommunicator been changed in the new code?

No. The definition is exactly the same as before; however, it is underlined in the text of HB3823 because it was moved from Section 1701.405(3), to a more logical location, Section 1701.001(7).

Does this law apply to Telecommunicators employed by Fire departments or EMS services?

No. The law only applies to law enforcement Telecommunicators. A Fire or EMS agency is welcome to take advantage of the training, however.

What training is now mandated for Telecommunicators?

Employers must provide all TCs with a basic 40-hour Telecommunicators course (TCLEOSE 1013) and the 24-hour Crisis Communications course (TCLEOSE 2120) by the first anniversary of their date of hire.

Are there exemptions from training for small agencies/part-time agencies?

No. The repeal of Section 1701.405(e) means that no agency is exempt from providing these courses for their Telecommunicators. All Texans deserve a qualified, trained Telecommunicator answering their emergency call.

How will my agency get this training?

TNT and TEEEX are busy developing low cost, on-line training for both mandated courses. Other sources for on-line training are available for Basic 40. Training in a classroom environment is also available (at low or no cost) in many parts of Texas. Check with your local 9-1-1 administrator or Police Academy for availability.

Does this legislation make Telecommunicators part of Civil Service?

No. In Section 1701.402(b) requires the Telecommunicator to complete local courses on federal and state statutes that relate to employment issues listed in this section. This is typically part of any new hire orientation.

Who can I contact if I want more information on the Occupational Code?

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Education is the state agency that oversees TC standards. You are also welcome to contact Patty Cross, TC Standards Steering Committee chair at pcross@denco.org or Sherry Decker, TNT Facilitator at sdecker@nctcog.org

These important changes recognize the increasing complexity of the 9-1-1 profession. They were conceived by the Texas 9-1-1 Trainers (TNT) organization and proposed by the TC Standards Steering Committee. TNT wishes to thank to Representative Senfronia Thompson and Senator Rodney Ellis for sponsoring the legislation during the 82nd Texas legislative session.