



## CITY OF ATLANTA

City Auditor's Office  
Leslie Ward, City Auditor  
404.330.6452

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### ***Why We Did This Audit***

We undertook this audit because our 2011 audit of Fire Department response times found that high E911 call transfer times contributed to the fire department's inability to meet response time standards. The fire department fell short of meeting the national standard of processing 90% of calls within 60 seconds.

E911 staff also expressed concern that the center did not have enough staff to handle its workload. The center spent \$1 million in overtime during fiscal year 2012.

### ***What We Recommended***

The Chief of Police should direct the E911 Communications Center to:

- Purchase scheduling software that will allow the center to develop shift schedules that optimize staff resources.
- Develop and implement shift schedules for communications staff that align staff with call workload. The center director should create staggered breaks.
- Require communications staff to properly record their status in the Positron system, eliminating any uncoded time.
- Continue to reinforce the existing call dispatching procedures and monitor dispatch times to ensure that call takers continue to transfer information to dispatchers as quickly as possible. Examine individual staff performance times and use the results to target training.

For more information regarding this report, please contact Stephanie Jackson at 404.330.6678 or [sjackson@atlantaga.gov](mailto:sjackson@atlantaga.gov)

## ***Performance Audit:***

### **Atlanta E911 Communications Center**

#### ***What We Found***

Shifting staff from the morning to the afternoon/early evening hours could improve performance throughout the day and reduce overtime. During fiscal year 2012 the center met its goal of answering at least 90% of emergency calls within 10 seconds. Although the center has not reached its goal of processing 90% of fire calls within 60 seconds, the center has improved its call processing time by implementing process changes.

The center met its answer goal for fiscal year 2012, but performance was uneven throughout the day. The center fell short of its goal 7 hours each day. The number of 911 calls was highest during the hour of 3:00 pm.

The center has more staff than needed during early morning hours to meet its answer time goal. Time spent on calls was twice as high during afternoon and evening hours compared to early morning. Call takers spent close to 50% of their time on emergency calls in the late afternoon and early evening and spent about 25% of their time on emergency calls during the early morning hours.

We calculated the number of call takers needed on duty by hour of day to handle existing workload while equalizing time waiting to take the next call at 33% of call takers' time. Our model added staff between noon and 9:00 pm and reduced staff between 11:00 pm and 8:00 am, while reducing total hours worked per week by about 305 hours. The reduction of hours by optimizing scheduling as well as some reduction of workload as a result of the implementation of the city's 311 call center should reduce the center's overtime usage.

While the center dispatched less than two percent of priority 1 emergency calls within 60 seconds in fiscal year 2012, process changes initiated by the Atlanta Police Department have begun to improve dispatch times, without the need for additional staff. Although fire dispatch times improved, the center was still far from reaching the NFPA standard of dispatching 90% of fire calls within 60 seconds. Industry literature suggests that the 60 second benchmark may not be reasonable.