



# 911 TRAINING CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

## 9-1-1 INVISIBLE TOOLS OF THE TRADE DISCOVERING MASTERY

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*"No set of protocol flip cards can take the place of this level of mastery." — Sue Pivetta*

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**E**mergency Communications is one of the most misunderstood yet fascinating professions in today's complex world. Pause for a moment to consider the perplexity of the work: answering calls from those in need of emergency services, gathering critical information in minutes, and mobilizing any number of available responders — and sustaining the responders and citizens as a safety net. What incredible work this is! Robert L. Stevenson said, *"I know what pleasure is, for I have done good work."* Any person who has answered emergency lines, or worked emergency radio knows *good work*. This training is dedicated to those who have and those who wish to achieve mastery in the work of emergency communications.

### EXPANDING OUR PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK

Perception is our understanding of our world and it is based on what we believe to be true. At

times our perception is limited by our experience, at times by what we are told and believe, and other times it is based on a set of unchallenged beliefs. Perception can be changed, that is what learning is about. Since our opinions and beliefs are based on history, we can change

**"Perception can be changed, that is what learning is about."**

how we think about something by taking in new information. Every person takes the limits of the field of vision for the limits of the world. So, what is your perception of the work? Can the work be performed to a high level all the time, are there methods, techniques and attitudes that can define and refine the daily work? Can we get better at what we do? Of course the answer is yes, but how? First each person must expand their perception and open to new thoughts and awareness of possibilities. Each person must allow creative thoughts and expanded opinions to enter the current perception.

*"Accumulate learning through study, understand what you learn by questioning."*

### **"What do you mean by mastery in the work?"**

*Sue Pivetta:* In workshops I ask "Is there such a thing as Mastery in this work?" As I look around the room I see heads nodding no, others speak up and say no, because there is no way to do this work perfectly, it's too diverse. So I ask, is mastery supposed to be perfection? Masters Golf Tourney where not every putt make it in.

*continued on page 4...*

### WHAT'S INSIDE

STRESS AND NEGATIVITY .....

**PLUS MORE GREAT IDEAS  
AND INSPIRATION  
THROUGHOUT!**

## DISCOVERING MASTERY

*continued from page 1*

Mastery needs to be redefined — or better defined — in our profession. Mastery means that you achieve success most of the time because you understand the work, the tools of the trade and know how to use them expertly *when needed*.

### “What do you mean by tools of the trade?”

*Sue Pivetta:* All professions have tools that assist in effectively accomplishing the work. In our profession we need to understand there are tools that **are not hardware**. Of course there are chairs, and computers, and E911, and recording devices — these are certainly tools. But these are not the only tools. Can a carpenter build a house with only a saw? Not only are there a number of different tools for different purposes, there is the knowledge of how to use the tools. With this work there are tools that are intangible — or *invisible* unless exposed. These are the tools we have yet to fully isolate, define, name and pass on purposefully.

When a trainer works with a trainee, indeed they do demonstrate those tools. The expertise, the way of handling a caller, the method of compartmentalize information, prioritization, visualizing the scene — that all comes from within. No set of protocol flip cards can take the place of this level of mastery. And to think so would be like asking a paramedic to pull out a set of flip cards when treating a patient who is lying on the street bleeding. No, these tools are accumulated through experience, expertise, intelligence — not by following a script.

It is no good to use a saw to pound a nail, just as it is no good to use forcefulness when you need receptivity. What I am suggesting is that we begin to analyze what works and why and then isolate, name and teach these seemingly illusive ways of being and doing to those new to the profession.”

### Examples of Intangible (Invisible) Emergency Call Taking and Dispatching Tools:

TOOL #1: SEND FIRST

TOOL #2: REASSURE THE CALLER (VOICE)

TOOL #3: VISUALIZATION

TOOL #4: COMPASSIONATE CONTROL (VOICE)

TOOL #5: KEEP THE PROMISE

### TOOLS OF THE TRADE #1 — SEND FIRST

We will use the first tool as an example of how we can begin to define what seems to be a simple concept into mastery. In this work the primary objective is to “send”.. In order to accomplish this primary objective with mastery we can instill in the trainee the importance and

depth of skill for **SEND FIRST** tool. If we characterize a tool as something that accomplishes a goal, and when used correctly, skillfully and consistently this tool will create success. So it is with Send First. The product of this work is the *response*. A

successful response means the units arrive quickly and safety with a full understanding of what they are responding to. Each call is a particular work of art, in that each is a new creation, each call is unique — therefore each takes the analysis of which tool to use. Regardless of the unique circumstances of the call, there are certain things to do, habits and methods that a call receiver can do consistently and purposefully to achieve the best results every time. Send First is one of those tools that quite simply is not discretionary but lacking in purposeful strategy. Tools have structure, substance, rules on how to be used and learning through demonstration and practice.

### Building Mastery SKILLS

In order to build skills — methods and habits can be practiced to ensure trainees are performing to

“The product of this work is the response”



#### WHAT YOU KNOW?

That your trainees need to practice the work of call taking, multi tasking and radio in a realistic setting.



#### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW?

You will increase skills, speed up learning, improve retention and find out faster who should move to the floor. Get your trainees 'floor ready' with 9-1-1 Reality Simulation.



#### IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

[www.911Trainer.com](http://www.911Trainer.com) - watch a demo of the Dispatcher's firing range.

the maximum potential. For example, you may want to build an allegory, metaphor or simple way to understand that can be remembered. Here is an example of what you could do with any tool, using SEND FIRST rules or keys to mastery.

**S**equence send information first and foremost

**E**ngage the caller about exact location

**N**ever rely on ALI alone — confirm

**D**o ask the caller to repeat, never ask “Are you at....?”

**F**inish send info with phone number

**I**nitate response without delay

**R**esolve to travel your area often

**S**tay alert to location uncertainty

**T**rain and re-train on area knowledge, maps, and addressing.

And in your efforts to further define this tool, you can expand on your interpretation of what that means by refining the allegory another deeper layer. Here is a brief example of what might be done with this example.

**S**equencing is when you ask questions in a pre-determined format. Questions regarding the location are always first and foremost. At times location is not as simple as a house address, there may be more complex issues but the core address or location is obtained first and the call taker should go no further unless a good location is obtained.

**E**ngaging the caller ensures that you are able to extract all that per-

son knows about the location. It is not the responsibility of the caller to offer this information. The caller could be in distress, distracted, or not focused on what is needed. It is your expertise that will be used to ask all the questions necessary to ensure arrival at the right location. There are several tools that can assist in obtaining, confirming and validating a location — especially when the caller is unable to offer a confirmation or the ALI is not available.

**N**ever rely on ALI alone. ALI is computer data, you have a person on the line, use the opportunity to secure the information from TWO sources. Relying on the ALI alone is careless work, don't be careless with people's lives.

**D**o not ask the caller to confirm what you repeat, have them repeat. Again, it is not the caller's responsibility to be a professional listener or an expert information giver, it is yours. The caller is often distracted and has other noises or thoughts

**“In order to build skills — methods and habits can be practiced”** : going on, If you simply offer them information, they may not hear 7 instead of 11, understand or distinguish the

difference between let's say Northeast and North.

**F**inish send info with phone number. Like the life preserver on board a boat, it may never get wet — but when it's needed desperately and you look around and can't find it — you could drown. Think big by obtaining the phone number of other locations that could be useful, for example, if the caller is at another location, ask the number into the

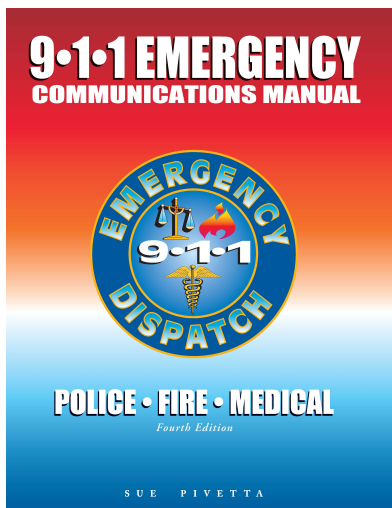
response location — there are a variety of phone numbers that may be helpful — however the send information is not complete without a phone number.

**I**nitate response without delay. As soon as you have a good location and a sense of what is happening — initiate a response. Units can be updated or upgraded if necessary. Callers are requesting a response, not dialogue. Be sure to use the terminology, “...as soon as possible” in reference to arrival times. You may tell a caller the units are dispatched if they are indeed ‘dispatched’. Call back if you have advised initially that the units were enroute if they are rerouted or delayed.

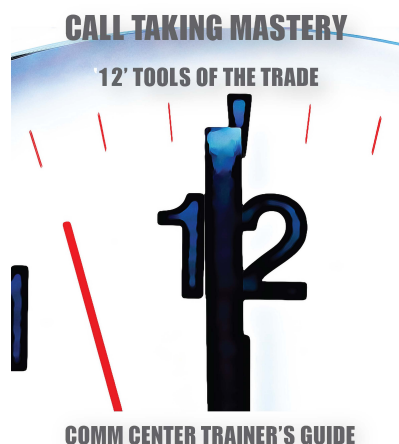
**R**esolve to travel your area often. One of your tools is area knowledge. A good dispatcher is familiar with the area, an excellent dispatcher has current in-depth knowledge of the area. If your agency dispatches for multiple agencies, travel unfamiliar locations often. If your agency brings in a new jurisdiction, travel before attempting to call take and dispatch that new area. Unfamiliarity with the landmarks and geography can lead to serious judgment errors and mistakes in information.

**S**tay alert to location uncertainty. If there is any indication the caller is not sure of the location or the location seems not right somehow — trust your feelings and challenge the information. Dig deeper, find a way to confirm what is said, ask things in a different way. Allow yourself to change or challenge your mind — you can only do this when connected to the call. Critical thinking asks each person to challenge the authority

**“One of your tools is area knowledge.”**



Download the 200  
Question Challenge.  
Over 10,000. copies sold.  
If your trainee cannot  
answer these questions  
buy the book!



Every trade has  
tools, have you  
named them, we  
have.

of information — to question —  
to never be satisfied unless com-  
pletely satisfied.

**T**rain and re-train on area knowl-  
edge, maps, and addressing. If you  
understand the addressing system  
(or lack of system) you can be of  
great assistance to the caller, the  
responders or other support agencies  
that may need to respond. The  
addressing system is not  
un-essential knowledge,  
this is vital knowledge.  
There are many ways to  
learn the area; by maps  
and by traveling the  
area. Your perceptions is based on  
experience, knowledge and history.  
Do not give yourself the opportunity  
to come up blank when confronted  
with areas you could have schooled  
yourself on.

**RE-CAP** Your job is to send! Gather  
send information first — using:

*your skill at asking questions  
recognizing addressing  
or location problems  
by your extensive  
knowledge of the area  
and attitude of professional  
and masterful dispatcher.*

**Isn't knowing how to send  
just basic, why such an  
emphasis on send?**

*Sue Pivetta:* As you can see above,  
by really isolating this simple need  
there are many complex issues. That  
is what we have been missing in  
this profession. This is what people  
on the outside do not understand

— that every part of this work has  
layers and layers of complexity.  
Sending the responders isn't quite  
as simple as initiating a response,  
just any response isn't good  
enough. In the last five years I have  
been involved as an expert witness  
in several lawsuits where —  
although there was a response to  
the right address — the quality or  
quantity of information provided

**"Never feel  
that mastery is  
a far reach. "**

to the responders was  
either not sufficient,  
incorrect or misleading.  
Those arriving on the  
scene often act according

to the information received from  
dispatch. Insufficient, incorrect  
or misleading information is not  
the work of an expert, a profes-  
sional, and certainly not a high  
level individual who had achieved  
mastery. Mastery must be earned,  
it is not given.

**What is the message you wish  
to pass on about Mastery?**

*Sue Pivetta:* Begin to see the work  
of emergency communications as  
work that can be mastered. Never  
feel that mastery is a far reach.  
Mastery is not perfection. Know  
that many of our professionals have  
reached Mastery — although they  
may not claim it or know it. How  
do you achieve mastery? Mastery  
comes from confidence. Confidence  
comes from experience. Experience  
defines mastery. Mastery comes  
from practice. Practice comes from  
commitment. And commitment  
comes from desire. Desire creates  
vision. Vision is created by vision-  
aries. Visionaries become Masters  
and lead others to Mastery.

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*The Exceptional Trainer, by Sue Pivetta.  
Our agency purchased this book for every trainer and created a  
discussion group around the 'adult learning concepts' found there.*