

# SNOQUALMIE PASS FIRE & RESCUE

King and Kittitas Counties Fire Protection District #51

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September 2, 2008

Sheriff Gene Dana  
Kittitas County Sheriff's Office  
205 – W 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Ste 1  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

RE: Snoqualmie Pass 911

Dear Gene:

I have received your letter dated August 7, 2008 regarding Kittitas 911 and specifically our request to re-route the Snoqualmie Pass 911 calls through our Dispatch Center, Eastside Dispatch. Prior to 2005, Snoqualmie Pass 911 calls were routed to Eastside Dispatch as documented by King County 911. Additionally, I am aware of at least one instance that a law enforcement 911 call did not go directly to Kittcom, prior to 2005.

I appreciate the time you have spent reviewing 911 calls in the Snoqualmie Pass area.

The idea of adopting the "911 Call Transfer Standard" dated March 20, 2008, while intriguing, is not specifically appropriate for this situation. I do not believe that this standard was adopted with the intent of having a "three way" call. Rather, it was adopted with the intent that if, for example, Kittcom receives a Fire Call that is in Snoqualmie Pass Fire & Rescue's jurisdiction, that the call be immediately transferred thereby having the call processed by our dispatch center.

Adopting this standard for this situation would be very confusing for the caller. As an example: KITTCOM answers the call and obtains information from the caller about the location and what's going on at the scene. Then stops them and says, "***Hold on we need to transfer this to Bellevue***" and then Kittcom transfers the call to Eastside Dispatch. KITTCOM then has to give Eastside Dispatch the info. From Eastside Dispatch's end they answer and KITTCOM says: "***We're taking a call in your jurisdiction, but you need to just listen (the caller is still on the line), here is the address...***"

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Simply put, this is not a good idea – certainly not for the patient nor victim as more confusion is likely to ensue.

In regards to the suggestion of “monitoring” the Kittcom frequency to listen for the same pre-dispatch that HD2 gets, this was a suggestion that was previously made. After much consideration, discussion, and testing we discovered that Kittcom calls are not always heard up here. It has also been determined that monitoring radios would interfere with most of our volunteers full time jobs, given the nature of the work of our volunteers. Additionally, our insurance carrier has indicated that our insurance would be invalid, unless our Dispatch Center dispatched a call we might be responding to.

Snoqualmie Pass Fire & Rescue prefers to pursue a solution that is more technology based. Technology has improved in recent years and I believe it would only make sense that we try to take advantage of technology that is available to us.

One such solution might be for the CAD system to send a page. Currently this is being done between Eastside Dispatch and other Comm Centers such as ValleyCom and SnoCom. This can be done automatically as either Dispatch Center takes a call and is always followed up by a manual phone call. However, in the situations that currently exist, it has decreased the dispatch times significantly.

It is possible that another solution could be found that takes advantage of current technology. In order to assess this possibility I believe that the Engineers from both Kittcom and Eastside Dispatch should get together to assess any other possible solutions.

### **South Central Region and Kittitas County EMS**

Your letter included some attached documents referencing different Kittitas County EMS Operational Policies as well as some different South Central Regional EMS & Trauma Care Council Patient Care Procedures. We are appreciative to receive these advisory documents. As you may know King County Fire District #51 is a multi-county Fire District and follows King County Protocols. When Kittitas County Fire District #5 and King County Fire District #49 merged, it was the desire of the citizens of Snoqualmie Pass that the two Fire Districts be merged into King County, hence the reason we are a King County Fire District.

As 100% of the ALS patients that we care for (in partnership with King County Medic One and Cle Elum Ambulance), and 98% of our BLS patients are transported west (into King County) it only makes sense that we follow King County Protocols. This is consistent with the role of the Medical Program Director as defined by WAC 246-976-920.

Since Snoqualmie Pass Fire & Rescue is in two different counties there have been challenges, in particular since the two counties involved have different EMS protocols. As you can imagine there have been times that both Kittitas and King County EMS agencies responding in our mutual area have needed to seek clarification from their respective Medical Program Directors in regards to established policies that have guided how EMS incidents are responded to in the Kittitas County area of our response area. In the spirit of collaboration, our Medical Program Director, Dr. Mickey

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Eisenberg, and Kittitas County Medical Program Director Dr. Jackson Horsley, along with Washington State Department of Health staff met on September 26, 2007. Notes that were taken from that meeting, as well as the April 9, 2008 Medical Program Director Guidelines that were co-signed by Dr. Eisenberg and Dr. Horsley have helped to clarify the processes that are to be followed for EMS incidents in the Snoqualmie Pass area. I am pleased to report that Snoqualmie Pass Fire & Rescue has adhered to the processes agreed to by both Medical Program Directors, and has done so consistently under the leadership of Fire Chief Matt Cowan, as well as his predecessors. Additionally, we are now providing a "short report" for certain incidents for which we have given a code green to an inbound Kittitas County Ambulance. This will assist them in their record keeping and we are happy to provide this, even though it means a slight deviation from our normal protocols.

## **Conclusion**

During a phone conversation you and I had a few weeks ago, it was my understanding that you were going to be discussing this issue with the County Commissioners and asking them to make a decision on this matter based upon your interpretation of RCW 38.52.510, which states "Statewide enhanced 911 service - Funding by counties. By December 31, 1998, each county, singly or in combination with adjacent counties, shall implement district-wide, county-wide, or multicounty-wide enhanced 911 emergency communications systems so that enhanced 911 is available throughout the state." However, our desire is to work collaboratively as possible, therefore, I would respectfully ask that you delay involvement of the County Commissioners, until such time we can adequately review our proposed solutions that involve current technology.

Our goal when Snoqualmie Pass Fire & Rescue met with you was to try to determine whether or not the Sheriff's office, from a law enforcement perspective, had any objections to the switchover of 911 calls in the Snoqualmie Pass area from Kittcom to Eastside Dispatch. We feel that an EMS response that could be improved 2-10 minutes would be a huge benefit even though it might mean a delay of 30 seconds for a law enforcement call that would most likely take 30-60 minutes. From your letter, and subsequent conversations, the only concern (beyond the potential delay of 30 seconds) I have heard about is what happens in the case of a "dual" law enforcement / EMS or Fire call. The answer is simple, the call goes to law enforcement and Fire / EMS only respond after the Sheriff's office has given the green light. This has been a consistent practice that has been in place whether or not we have worked with King County Sheriff, the Kittitas County Sheriff or the Washington State Patrol.

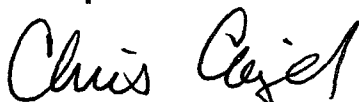
If an adequate solution can not be found that involves technology, given the current information that has been provided to us, it will be our intent to seek the change of 911 call routing in the Snoqualmie Pass Area to Eastside Dispatch. It should be noted that such a change would have zero impact on the workload at Eastside Dispatch and would benefit all parties concerned.

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As a final note, during the last Kittitas County Fire Chief's meeting on July 24, 2008, a current project was discussed of implementing an "At Risk Resident Notification" system in which citizens would be called during a natural disaster or some other local emergency to see if help was needed. It should be pointed out that unless Eastside Dispatch takes all of the 911 calls for the Snoqualmie Pass Area, that the responsibility for implementing the "At Risk Resident Notification" system for the Snoqualmie Pass Area will fall upon Kittitas County. If calls were routed through Eastside Dispatch, then we would be able to utilize Reverse 911 which would negate the need for "At Risk Resident Notification" at Snoqualmie Pass.

Sincerely,

**Snoqualmie Pass Fire & Rescue**



Chris L. Caviezel, Commissioner

Cc: Mike Lopez  
Mickey Eisenberg  
Jackson Horsley  
Chief Craig McKee  
Melody Westmoreland  
Cheryl Burrows  
Kittitas County Commissioner Mark McClain  
Kittitas County Commissioner Alan Crankovich  
Kittitas County Commissioner Linda Huber  
Darlene Mainwaring  
Chief John Sinclair  
Pam Heide, Eastside Communications  
Marlys Davis, King County 911

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