

**RICHMOND DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**  
**NEWS RELEASE: Richmond 911 earns national accreditation**

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High-resolution images available for download at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/911rva/albums/72157696824481415>

**Richmond 911 center earns national accreditation**

GAINESVILLE, Virginia – The national accreditation for public safety communications has been awarded to Richmond’s 911 agency.

The Richmond Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) received the national Public Safety Communications Accreditation on May 4 by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA®).

Through the multi-year accreditation process, the department voluntarily demonstrated how it meets international best practices in public safety and professionally recognized criteria for excellence in management and service delivery. It completed a self-assessment phase and a meticulous site-based assessment in October 2018 of community engagement, policy, procedures, equipment and facilities by CALEA assessors.

“The accreditation process has evolved Richmond DEC from a good emergency communications center to a great center,” said Director Stephen M. Willoughby. “CALEA’s benchmarks will help ensure that we remain a high-performance organization that provides superior service to those who live, work and play in the city of Richmond,” he said.

The accreditation was awarded during the CALEA conference, May 1-4, 2019, in Huntsville, Alabama. Willoughby and Tory Maye, deputy director of operations; Jackie Crotts, deputy director of technology; and Kathy Berg, emergency communications manager, accepted the accreditation, after appearing before CALEA’s 21-member Board of Commissioners that reviewed all findings and determined its accreditation status.

This is DEC's first award of national accreditation. It now moves into CALEA's four-year accreditation cycle that includes four annual remote, web-based file reviews and a site-based assessment in the fourth year.

"This award of accreditation does not come easy," said CALEA President Anthony Purcell. "The Richmond Department of Emergency Communications went through a rigorous review and evaluation of their organization and then implemented the necessary policy and procedure changes. The process does not stop now. By voluntarily choosing to seek CALEA accreditation, DEC commits to an ongoing review of adherence to CALEA's standards. The Richmond community should feel confident that DEC is going above and beyond and operating under the highest standards in public safety."

CALEA was created in 1979 through the combined efforts of four major law enforcement organizations: the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Sheriffs' Association and the Police Executive Research Forum.

### **Benefits of Accreditation**

**Controlled liability insurance costs:** Accredited status makes it easier for agencies to purchase liability insurance; allows agencies to increase the limit of their insurance coverage more easily; and, in many cases, results in lower premiums.

**Stronger defense against lawsuits and citizen complaints:** Accredited agencies are better able to defend themselves against lawsuits and citizen complaints. Many agencies report a decline in legal actions against them once they become accredited.

**Greater accountability within the agency:** Accreditation standards give the Chief Executive Officer a proven management system of written directives, sound training, clearly defined lines of authority, and routine reports that support decision making and resource allocation.

**Staunch support from government officials:** Accreditation provides objective evidence of an agency's commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management, and service-delivery. Thus, government officials are more confident in the agency's ability to operate efficiently and meet community needs.

**Increases community advocacy:** Accreditation embodies the precepts of community-oriented policing. It creates a forum in which police and citizens work together to prevent and control crime. This partnership helps citizens understand the challenges confronting law enforcement and gives law enforcement clear direction about community expectations.

**Improved employee morale:** Accreditation is a coveted award that symbolizes professionalism, excellence, and competence. It requires written directives and training to inform employees about policies and practices; facilities and equipment to ensure employee safety; and processes to safeguard employee rights. Employees take pride in their agency, knowing it represents the very best in public safety.

## About CALEA

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc., (CALEA®) was created in 1979 as a credentialing authority through the joint efforts of law enforcement's major executive associations: International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP); National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE); National Sheriffs' Association (NSA); and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

The purpose of CALEA's Accreditation Programs is to improve the delivery of public safety services, primarily by: maintaining a body of standards, developed by public safety practitioners, covering a wide range of up-to-date public safety initiatives; establishing and administering an accreditation process; and recognizing professional excellence.

Specifically, CALEA's goals are to: Strengthen crime prevention and control capabilities; Formalize essential management procedures; Establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices; Improve service delivery; Solidify interagency cooperation and coordination; and Increase community and staff confidence in the agency.

The CALEA Accreditation Process is a proven modern management model; once implemented, it presents the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), on a continuing basis, with a blueprint that promotes the efficient use of resources and improves service delivery—regardless of the size, geographic location, or functional responsibilities of the agency.

This accreditation program provides public safety agencies an opportunity to voluntarily demonstrate that they meet an established set of professional standards based on industry best practices and approved by an all-volunteer board of commissioners.

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*The city of Richmond's Department of Emergency Communications answers and dispatches all 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls as well as provides and supports public safety infrastructures in order to ensure safety by linking the public with first responders and other non-emergency services. For emergencies, call 911 if you can, text if you can't. For non-emergency information, call 804-646-5100. News media resources at <http://www.richmondgov.com/EmergencyCommunications/OnlineNewsroom.aspx>. Follow Richmond Department of Emergency Communications on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/911RVA/> and on Twitter @911rva.*