

also seek additional training opportunities in areas in which they may be weak.

**5. Understand the importance of a quality assurance/improvement program.** The first thing that telecommunicators think when this program is put in place at their agency is that the agency is out to get them. The truth of the matter is, the agency is out to recognize when the telecommunicator is doing things the right way. This program is not a disciplinary program, but rather a motivational tool and an agency's "insurance policy" that everyone is being properly trained.

**6. Get behind accreditation and certification.** Each agency that chooses to meet the APCO Agency Training Certification requirements and/or the CALEA Accreditation requirements will minimize its liability tremendously. The standards required in each of these programs have been created by industry experts who understand the operations

of a communication center. An agency that earns either of these recognitions ensures that every telecommunicator follows the requirements.

**7. Document, document, document.** As the saying goes, if it's not in writing, it didn't happen. Information typed into the CAD system could mean the difference between "guilty" and "not guilty." The CAD record should draw a picture of what is happening or has occurred throughout the entire call for service. Minimum documentation in the CAD record will raise a red flag in a courtroom. Trying to remember what happened because it wasn't put in the CAD is even harder.

The risk that every person carries in the communication center is the same amount of risk that someone else would carry in any other job or profession — maybe not the exact type, but it is all a liability. The key is to minimize your exposure.

One last thought: If something should occur and you are named in a lawsuit, think about the people who will be deciding your guilt or innocence. Most likely, the jury will consist of 12 people who have never been inside a communication center and do not understand what goes on in one. They don't understand that when you are talking to someone on the phone, you are also doing three other things at the same time. It is your responsibility to have everything in place so if this should ever happen, those 12 people can be educated on what goes on in the communication center based purely on the programs in place at the agency, the status of the agency and training opportunities. ●

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Attending training sessions should be a priority for all telecommunicators.