

# SATISFACTION

A nationwide survey finds that public safety telecommunicators believe in their work, while some aspects could stand improvement.

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**E**mergency communications centers (ECCs) across the nation continue to struggle with retaining telecommunicators and it's a growing problem. Some ECCs have tried to improve retention by increasing pay, creating flexible work schedules, and providing coaching and personal development training to improve skills and reduce stress. Retention issues affect response times for calls for service, put first responders at risk, and cause physical and psychological issues due to an increased workload for remaining workers.

Employees are often the best source of information to understand their lived experiences as well as to shape solutions to improve the organization. So what do telecommunicators believe about their work and what do they believe needs to be prioritized to improve their work experience?

The authors created an online survey and posted it on multiple social media platforms to understand this question. The survey sought responses from telecommunicators

who left a position or were no longer working for an ECC. Within two weeks, 480 telecommunicators from across the country responded. Some respondents skipped one or two questions. Most of the respondents were female (80%). Only 24% of respondents indicated that they retired as a telecommunicator. In terms of age, the greatest percentage of respondents were between 45 and 54 years old (27.35%), followed by 35 to 44 years old (23.80%), 55 to 65 years old

(23.38%) and 25 to 34 (18.58%). Only 1.46% were between 25 and 34 years of age while 4.59% were between 65 and 74, with just 0.84% 75 or older.

## TENURE

We also asked, "How many years did you work as a telecommunicator" and a majority (14.53%) of respondents indicated that they worked at this position for 26 years or more (see Figure 1). Since the survey intentionally sought out former telecommunicators, it was not surprising. The interesting finding was telecommunicators exited at years 5, 10, 15, 18, and 20 at a rate almost double that of other years. It should be noted that the difference between years 15 and 18 was 1 person.

## WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST TO LEAST ABOUT BEING A TELECOMMUNICATOR?

A majority (54.91%) of telecommunicators indicated that they liked the work itself (see Figure 2). Pay (19.35%) was ranked second followed by coworkers (7.87%), benefits (6.60%), schedule (5.73%), communication (2.55%), supervisors (1.52%), operating procedures (0.87%), awards (0.85%), and promotion (0.65%).

## WHAT SHOULD ECCS FOCUS ON TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES?

Respondents ranked in order what ECCs should focus on to retain employees (see Figure 3). Though pay was ranked second for what respondents liked best, they also indicated pay was the main thing that ECCs should focus on to retain employees (46.29%). Supervisors were deemed the next

