



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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911 Dispatch prepared to take missing/exploited child calls

Tooele County Sheriff 911 Dispatchers recently completed requirements to qualify as a partner with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). This partnership means the Tooele County Dispatch Center is better prepared to handle those initial 911 calls that are the first step towards saving a missing or endangered child in Tooele County.

Dispatch Supervisor, Lt. Regina Campbell, is excited about and proud of this accomplishment. "I feel better now, no matter who takes that call, that we're all on the same page and trained to properly take calls about missing children," she said.

Dispatch Shift Supervisor, Sgt. Randi Gamble, said "Every dispatcher in our agency has completed extensive training and received the certification offered to properly handle [calls regarding missing children]. Our agency has implemented policies and procedures, and established a quality assurance program to meet the requirements established by NCMEC."

The Dispatch Center now has a Checklist for Call Takers When Handling Calls Pertaining to Missing and Sexually Exploited Children. That checklist is uploaded onto the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system which prompts call takers with the right questions to ask the caller. It is similar to the Pro QA system for medical calls. Officers can also see the questions and responses on the laptop computers in their patrol cars.

An Early Response Checklist also prompts dispatchers on the appropriate agencies that need to be alerted in cases of missing children. These upgrades to the Dispatch Center ultimately help the response efforts of law enforcement, fire, and EMS be more efficient and quicker.

Campbell said, "This gives us a better understanding of how the national level would like us to respond and how quickly we need to activate the necessary resources. The first three hours are the most critical when trying to save a missing child."

(more)

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Since it was established by Congress in 1984, the organization has operated the toll-free, 24 hour, national missing children's hotline, which has handled more than 2.4 million calls. It has assisted law enforcement in the recovery of more than 145,600 children.

The organization's CyberTipline has handled more than 751,000 reports of child sexual exploitation; and its Child Victim Identification Program has reviewed and analyzed more than 28,465,000 child pornography images and videos. The organization works in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice's office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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