



Dear Customers,

In 2005 I contacted a national accreditation agency to voice my concern that SIMULATION training was not included in Best Practices for Emergency Communications Center training. I wrote to every Board Member explaining the adult learning concepts and the challenges of console only training which was challenging to the trainer and costly to the trainee and the learning process. Their reply was disappointing.

In effect they stated, **“We believe that in this type of work, the trainee learns best by watching an expert perform the work.”** I replied that a police trainee did not watch a marksman at the firing range, they fired at the target. I further argued that an officer is not handed a gun and car and expected to perform live the first time – there is an academy with much practice and simulated settings. Slowly my arguments faded as fewer and eventually no Board Members would engage in discourse on the subject of accreditation of our training. I haven’t viewed their recent standards, maybe by now they have changed their disappointing view of learning in the emergency communications environment. But this letter isn’t about that agency. This letter is a celebration.

You all know my passion for simulation training, born from my years of training in the college lab setting. There is just no substitute for practice, modeling and feedback. Today, I was directed to the **NFPA 2007 Public Safety Telecommunicator Standards**. I had to share with you the NFPA’s theory on training. Today is a good day with this realization that emergency communications training is now finally viewed by such an accrediting authority with a realistic eye.

Please take the initiative to read or order NFPA 1061 Standards. Read below just one portion of this high level document.

NFPA STANDARDS

C.1.1 Background/Overview.

Training that involves actual workplace conditions is an element that ensures that the linkage between classroom knowledge and job performance skills is completed. In many processes, this linkage is created through the use of on-the-job training (OJT).

C.1.2 Elements.

Many visualize the procedure of placing a new employee with an experienced worker and allowing the new employee to watch over his or her shoulder to learn the job. Under these conditions, the process has only limited success at best. Often it leaves the employer and employee dissatisfied with the outcome. The employee feels apprehension from being overwhelmed with too many sensory stimuli of new duties and new people. It is a human characteristic to attempt to absorb the new environment, but it can be distracting from the task at hand. He or she might also feel apprehension about taking too long to become “productive.”

The employer will, in some cases, feel the process takes too long before Scenarios and conditions can be structured to closely replicate actual working conditions to enhance the learning experience. The knowledge and background experience of each of the participants can be pooled to create innovative solutions to problems. These problems are structured to lead to the completion of stated objectives of the class. Students can come away from a collaborative learning experience with a new sense of self-confidence and appreciation for the skills and knowledge of their fellow students.

I cannot offer any more of their document due to copyright restrictions but as you can tell, it's a good read for all administrators and trainers.

Thank you NFPA