

Skills preparation

study guide

for students.

Notebook for

training sessions.



## **WELCOME TO THE 911 ZONE**

This is a study guide  
and notebook for  
your skill lessons.

Through skills training  
you will better understand  
what is needed to thrive  
in this important work.

Enjoy!

**SAMPLE ANSWER SHEET**

**ZONE 1 SPLIT EAR MULTI TASKS**

**DESCRIPTION**

Three stereo tracks portray three different lists that are short spurts of information: colors, numbers and letters. The words at times are solitary, at times two overlap, at times all three overlap. The listener is to enter the data as heard into boxes provided.

**WORK COMPARISON**

When a dispatcher or call taker is working, there are three types of input: the radio, the phone, and verbal messages from co-workers or citizens with counter contact. At times there may be more with intercoms, cameras, alarms or office noise. The information coming audibly to the worker is random, sporadic, sometimes overlapping, unexpected and must be acknowledged or captured, even if the information is unfamiliar.

**SKILL NEEDED**

Listening skills to delineate spurts of messages from one another, isolate and record even through partially covered. Ability to react quickly to audio information by recording the information into data entry fields. Ability to separate and correctly place specific information into the correct location. Ability to continue even though under pressure of the information being transitory.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

This exercise is fast paced, you don't get a second chance so keep up. Work hard and be tenacious in your concentration. You must not focus on one column – your score is determined by the column with the least amount of correct answers.

WHAT I THOUGHT AND FELT	NEW INFORMATION

**Zone 2**  
*Following Directions*

1. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
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 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_ SSN \_\_\_\_\_

**ZONE 2 FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS**

**DESCRIPTION**

The student is supplied with a set of cards. Four exercises instruct the student to put the cards on the table in a particular way. When the cards are all on the table, the student is allowed time to record on their answer sheet the placement of the cards.

**WORK COMPARISON**

When a Telecommunicator is working in the Com Center atmosphere there are many different tasks that must be performed quickly and with precise attention to getting things done. In training there is a time when the new hire must actually take over the call receiving or dispatching function for the first time. They never know what type of call they may get on their first day or week. Their Trainer sits behind them and during the call, offers precise directions on what to do in CAD and what to perform as far as dispatching, data entry and what to say or ask of the caller. The trainee must be able to react quickly to explicit instructions.

**SKILL NEEDED**

Manual dexterity, listening, quick reactions, taking corrective action, multi track thinking, following directions.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

The exercise will sound something like, "put the A to the right of the B." If you don't put strict attention to right and left, you will get lost. Make sure you have enough room on the table to place the cards down. You may need to adjust the cards as they lay to make more room.

As the exercises progress they will get faster and the directions will be combined.

WHAT I THOUGHT AND FELT	NEW INFORMATION

**ZONE 3 VISUALIZATION**

**DESCRIPTION**

Four simulated 911 hang up calls are played. The student is to record the facts and impressions of the call and offer a message to responding units.

**WORK COMPARISON**

911 hang ups are a common occurrence at a Com Center. The Call Taker must make decisions based on the facts and impressions about the call. It is vital that a Call Taker is able to focus on the call to gather facts. Next the Call Taker must use those facts and impressions to make a correct assessment of the call and create a message for the responders.

**SKILL NEEDED**

Visualizing, listening, focus, interpretation, give form to a message, formulate a common sense opinion based on listening to events and impressions, composure, tenacity.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

There are times when a person calls 911 and is unable to communicate with the Call Taker. The Call Taker patiently listens to what is happening to make a determination what action to take. When it is determined that a response must be initiated, the information about what is happening is passed on to the responders. It is essential that the responders have a realistic concept of what they are responding to, as some of their actions as they approach the scene may be based on their understanding. The Call Taker plays a critical role in gathering and reporting information.

It may not seem like these calls offer a great deal of information but they actually do. There are two types of information you can gather and offer to the units. There is no direct observation with the eyes, but with the ears and the senses. There are details, data and facts and then there are impressions, observations and opinions.

**Fact vs. Impression**

Let us say a man walks into a store with a gun.

Fact is – a man walked into the store with a gun

Impression – he is a robber

Observation – this is a Pawn Shop

Opinion – he could be selling the gun

During this exercise we want you to list the facts, details of the call and then your impressions. You then have a chance to tell the responders what they should know to arrive safely. If you hear a woman screaming, all you have is that a woman is screaming, there are many different causes for someone to scream. If you add a baby crying, and a distraught family in the background, you deduce that there may be a family problem. What you report to the responders is the woman screaming and a baby crying and other people that sound distraught. If you catch a word or a phrase that you cannot really identify but you get the “impression” that this is a family fight (domestic) your impression may be valuable – but only if you present it as your impression. No one has told you there is a domestic. Now if the woman comes to the phone and states, we are having a family fight, he hit me – you can now tell the units that the female at the residence states she has been hit by the male.

Everything you hear or think is important for this exercise, do not leave anything out. When you give your message to the responders make sure to offer both details and impressions if you have any.

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**WHAT I THOUGHT AND FELT**

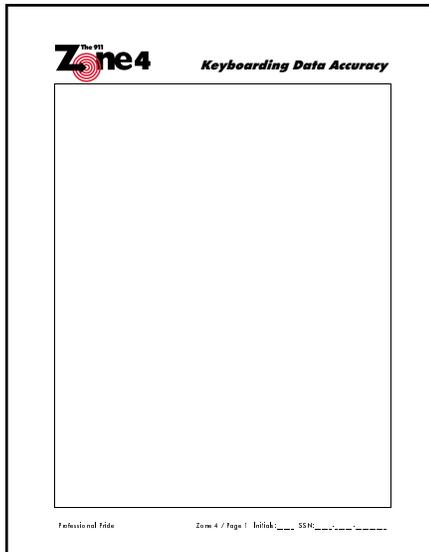
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**NEW INFORMATION**

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**ZONE 4 KEYBOARDING ACCURACY**

**DESCRIPTION**

The common typing test does not offer the agency the ability to evaluate a student in the work they will be performing. This is a typing evaluation that is a realistic example of what a Telecommunicator will be typing. The student is offered names, addresses, phone numbers and businesses. The student enters the data with accuracy in mind using abbreviations.

**WORK COMPARISON**

Telecommunicators type names addresses, phone numbers and business names every time they take a call.

**SKILL NEEDED**

Typing 30-40 wpm with accuracy

**WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Accuracy is your main concern. When a citizen requests a response from an emergency service provider, their address, phone number, and name is vital information and seconds save lives. If an address is incorrect a response could be delayed. The phone number is part of the “send” information for several reasons. The phone number serves as a back up if the address is incorrect. The phone number is also a confirmation of an address, certain prefixes are tied to certain communities and looking at the prefix and the address to make sure the caller is giving the correct information is useful.

The information comes in at 30-40wpm. Your goal is 100% accuracy!

At the end of each phone number, hit the return key and begin a new line.

<b>WHAT I THOUGHT AND FELT</b>	<b>NEW INFORMATION</b>

Assessment  
Center for  
Emergency  
Communications  
Professionals



Promotions  
Hiring  
Director/Manager  
Deputy Director  
Supervisor  
Trainer

### **COM CENTER ZONE GUIDE & MATERIALS**

In this package you should receive this book, Zone CD that provides your candidate worksheets, with scoring guides, and Zone Complaint video. This book is your test proctor's guide to using the Zone. The Zone CD Test Templates are each candidate worksheets and instructions in .pdf files. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to open and print each form as needed. Providing the forms in pdf allow your agency to select and print out any number of testing packets for your candidates. You are free to add documents that you create to this grouping. The Zone Complaint video is one of the evaluation tools and must NOT be used for any other purpose if you wish to maintain the integrity of the test.

### **COPYRIGHT NOTICE – SITE LICENSE**

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### **SUGGESTED TIME**

There are many ways to draw on the Zone, and it may be utilized for different purposes. Your agency selection committee should review all the offerings, selecting tests most applicable for the skills or knowledge required or desired. Time allowed for testing can be arranged around the number of tests selected. Individual test times are suggested, however this is a flexible area.

### **ZONE EVALUATION OBJECTIVE**

The Zone is a comparative study of candidate's ability to handle simulated management decisions, perform interpersonal and written communications, design training or recognize common Com Center issues. The candidate is offered an opportunity to prioritize and demonstrate prioritizing and judgment skills. Zone evaluations are also provided for peer teamwork and delegation ability. A variety of levels of expertise evaluations for your Com Center are offered. The Zone offers realistic and practical ways to zone in on the best person for the job.

### **SCORING**

Candidates are scored compared to one another. Easy to use, straight-forward scoring suggestions are provided. Once your committee has designed the test the total scoring will be shaped. You agency may choose to create a graph displaying each test topic for comparisons of skill and subject matter knowledge.

### **IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES**

Industry experts experience totaling over one hundred years of combined know-how collaborated to design these assessments. We covered a vast range of needed skills, knowledge and attitudes. Any professional will quickly recognize the value of the Com Center Zone.

### **AGENCY DESIGNED**

Police, Fire, EMD or Combined Centers will find the Zone invaluable. Select any or all of the assessments for your candidates. All are 'Emergency Communications' generic and allow candidate to demonstrate leadership, knowledge, skills and desirable management attitudes most sought after for administrative positions in a Com Center.

### **SETTING STANDARDS**

This evaluation can also be used to set standards for your current employees. Through this series of evaluations you can expose needed areas of improvement, training or agency needs. Feel free to offer the Zone as an evaluative tool for current employees.

## **ADMINISTERING THE ZONE**

One major consideration in our design was ease of administering. The Zone is 100% user-friendly. You will quickly recognize the quality design and attention to a wide range of testing factors that are easy to score. The Zone was designed to be uncomplicated for judges and candidates. The In-House Zones allow for selection committee determination regarding the correct number of issues to consider – all Com Center's are not alike, although there are common issues.

## **SELECT A TEST PROCTOR GUIDE**

Test Proctors organize the set up, time and dates as well as select and train the Assessment Center Judges. The Proctor is the one to offer candidates instructions regarding the assessment day activities and scoring while allowing an avenue for assistance when needed. Test Proctors will ensure the fair and equitable offering of the evaluation and be responsible for gathering, scoring and organizing results notification. Test Proctors are not recommended as Judges.

## **IN PREPARATION**

Judges must be selected and trained. All candidates must be advised of the test requirements so they may request accommodations if necessary. Scheduling with adequate and equitable time for each candidate must be arranged. Other to-do preparations are room reservations, with set up and time allowances. Also processes and training for scoring must be completed. Finally decisions on notification of candidate or results and elimination can be determined. The process for testing and result notification must also be posted and followed.

## **WHAT IS NEEDED**

Candidates are provided with a quiet private location with a computer. For the Complaint Zone, the candidate will need a VCR. For the meeting select a private office with room for the candidate, the actor and the Judges. One test proctor and three judges are recommended. A complete flow chart of process statement must be published regarding the way the test will be conducted and results will be gathered and notified including dates.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR JUDGES**

It is strongly suggested that all Judges have minimum experience of 2 years Com Center Supervisor. It is requested that only Com Center managers or supervisors, trainers or other administrators in Emergency Communications are utilized as judges. Recognizing that many assessment centers use outside professionals (police or fire professionals) we believe only Communications professionals have the higher-level understanding of this work to competently rate the candidate. The evaluations in the Zone are woven with intricate details that would not be apparent to a police officer (for example). Many of the skills rated here are subtle and complex, and outside professionals may not recognize the intricacy involved.

## **SCORING**

Guidelines for scoring are offered and all follow the 1-2-3 method. Our goal was to keep the scoring simple and defined. Either their job was (1) under expected, (2) as expected, or (3) more than expected. The scoring is not based on a 100% score, the top score may be 35 for example. It doesn't matter what the score is, as long as the candidates are scored compared to one another.

It is recommended that judges use the space provided to comment on scores of 1 or 3. In the event one judge scores a 1 and another a 3 on the same item, this is ground for discussion before the final scoring is submitted.

The process for scoring would be to complete the Zone testing, duplicate the submit envelope contents exactly for each judge and distribute. Allow each judge an amount of time to score. Judges meet and compile and compare the scoring, discussing any widely divergent scores. The candidate is then awarded both an overall score and scores in each subject matter evaluated.

Those Zones that require the judge's attendance (the employee counseling and the meeting) are scored during and directly after the gathering.

Allowing scoring to be completed at a later date should be discouraged, judges must be uncontaminated and fresh from training or instructions.

Impartial, fair and equal access to testing, proctor and assistance is an absolute must.

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**DESCRIPTION**

*This assessment is a series of memos that require written responses and possibly a formal communication. The candidate is asked to respond to each in writing answering a set of four questions regarding each memo. The Agency may select appropriate memos or create new memos, depending upon the position the person is testing for. For example, if this is a Trainer position, you may want to add some problem specifically associated with training. The template is here, feel free to be as creative as needed to expose the best candidate.*

**IN BASKET ZONE**

**MATERIALS/TIME**

In-basket Contents/Workstation: Memos, worksheets and In Basket submit envelope (any large envelope with the candidate's name).

Time suggested: 2 hours for 10 memos.

**CANDIDATE TASKS**

Candidates are asked to comment on the memo and prepare a correspondence in reply if appropriate. The memo and documents are attached and placed in the In-Basket submit envelope. Candidates are reminded to watch the time on the worksheet as they are scored based on the amount of work processed also.

**SCORING**

The number of memos used determines the totality of the score. And the score will be dependent upon how much work is done, and the quality of that work. 10 memos are suggested, either Zone or agency created. Scoring is generic enough for any memo product.

Score each individual memo 1,2, 3 by circle on the worksheet.

**POINTS**

- 1 - Candidate failed to recognize their responsibility or steps to be taken. Poor quality, document(s) need editing, errors in grammar, spelling.
- 2 - Candidate exercised good judgment and took appropriate action. Good quality paperwork, no errors and practical as is.
- 3 - Candidate exercised excellent judgment, demonstrated remarkable understanding and follow through. Outstanding, more than expected quality product produced.