

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Communications Specialist**

**Class Code: 40392**

**Pay Grade: GF**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Maintains communications with law enforcement personnel and monitors their activity while they are out of their vehicles; and reviews, researches, relays, compiles, and logs information received through the State Radio Communications network to provide information to state, federal, and local law enforcement agencies, personnel, and the public.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Communications Specialists operate the communications network at a State Radio Communications station, coordinates available resources for associated agencies, and monitor multiple alarm and security systems.

Communications Specialist Supervisors supervise Communications Specialists at a State Radio Communications station, direct and monitor communication activities, investigate and provide information regarding complaints, request maintenance on tower sites and equipment, and perform communications specialist duties.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Operates a computer based multi-talk group communications system, teletype system, multi-line electronic key telephone network; and monitors multiple alarm systems and electronic paging system to provide accurate information and assistance to state, federal, and local law enforcement personnel or agencies in the field.
  - a. Responds to radio communications initiated by law enforcement personnel.
    - i. Receives and provides information.
    - ii. Logs the time law enforcement personnel go on and off duty.
    - iii. Times how long officers are out of their vehicles during stops and notifies other law enforcement personnel to assist if the other officer does not respond.
  - b. Provides and coordinates radio communications with law enforcement personnel during pursuits and emergency situations.
  - c. Enters requested information into the computer system to search for and provide driver, vehicle, or subject information to law enforcement personnel.
  - d. Answers telephone inquiries and calls regarding emergencies or requests for information and relays information to law enforcement or agency personnel.
  - e. Reviews, logs, and disseminates information retrieved from in-state and nationwide database systems.
  - f. Responds to telephone calls from the public regarding current road construction situations and road conditions during inclement weather.
  - g. Broadcasts weather watches and warnings to law enforcement personnel and agencies.
  - h. Monitors computerized alarm systems for digital statewide radio network, building, and facility access calling or paging appropriate personnel to respond to these alarms.
  - i. Provides the after hours support, response, and emergency call-outs for applicable agencies.

2. Monitors and relays emergency information broadcast by the National Warning System to keep agencies and the public informed.
  - a. Responds to continuous national radio communications testing daily.
  - b. Initiates testing once daily to specific warning points within the state.
  - c. Provides weather information to the agencies and the public regarding emergency situations such as tornadoes, fires, floods, etc.
  - d. Relays information between agencies and personnel during emergency or disaster situations such as railroad accidents, searching for downed aircraft or missing persons, and other civil emergencies.
  
3. Compiles, logs, and disseminates information obtained from in-state and nationwide database systems to provide essential data to personnel in the field.
  - a. Sends messages via National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) to other agencies and personnel.
  - b. Enters, modifies, cancels, and retrieves information from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) on the database system pertaining to stolen vehicles or articles; and missing, unidentified, and wanted persons.
  - c. Obtains information for traffic stops such as driver's license information, driver histories, vehicle titles and registrations, boat registrations, criminal histories, etc.
  - d. Contacts the Division of Criminal Investigation regarding possible Amber Alerts.
  
4. Records shift activity and maintains criminal and missing person files to ensure the availability of accurate and up-to-date records for future reference.
  - a. Records all activity generated by field units including the unit initiating the activity; type of activity; date, times, and location; actions taken; and final disposition of the activity.
  - b. Maintains daily log of all shift activity generated by field units and calls for service received and dispatched.
  - c. Researches available records/logs to provide information requested by law enforcement personnel, agencies, and the public.
  
5. Performs other work as assigned.

**D. Reporting Relationships:**

The position reports to a Communication Specialist Supervisor and does not supervise others but may act as a lead worker over less experienced personnel.

**E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenges include remaining calm during very stressful situations and effectively prioritizing emergency calls. This is difficult because of the need to maintain clear and effective communications often with distraught, anxious, or irate individuals in emergency situations while obtaining and providing accurate information as well as dispersing the information to the proper authorities in the field. This task can also be compounded and complicated when dealing with multiple geographical areas, using several talk groups, computer, and telephone systems concurrently. It is also challenging to handle multiple tasks and calls. This is difficult because the incumbent must prioritize, remain calm, and calm irate and anxious individuals.

Problems include dealing with an increased number of calls during inclement weather; maintaining contact with law enforcement personnel when they are out of their vehicles; locating law enforcement officers in the field; responding to several requests for information at the same time; dealing with malfunctioning alarms, communications towers, and equipment; numerous telephone calls from the public often reporting the same accident or incident and the caller is not

sure what they are seeing or when officers have already responded to the scene; and monitoring twenty-six communications channels while officers calling in are only monitoring one channel.

#### **F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions made include prioritizing radio and telephone calls, determining which authorities and supervisory personnel should be notified, what support needs to be initiated or is necessary in emergency situations, whether to request assistance for an officer who is on a traffic stop and does not respond to their radio, and what information will be provided to callers.

Decisions referred include policy or procedure changes, personnel decisions, scheduling and changes to the schedule, what to do about equipment problems, and approval of overtime.

#### **G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with law enforcement personnel to provide information or assistance; local, state, and federal agency personnel to give and receive information; and the public to receive and provide information.

#### **H. Working Conditions:**

The incumbent works at a fixed radio communications station and is confined to the workstation for extended periods of time. State Radio operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and all holidays, requiring the incumbent to work rotating or multiple shifts, non-traditional hours, and may require short turnarounds. The incumbent is constantly placed in stressful situations requiring him or her to be aware of and maintain contact with law enforcement personnel outside of their vehicles and/or involved in pursuits or special emergency or enforcement situations.

#### **I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- communication network operating procedures;
- basic law enforcement and emergency response procedures;
- radio codes, procedures, and etiquette;
- basic computer operations, including Microsoft Office software;
- the geography, highways, counties, and communities of the state.

Ability to:

- operate a computer based multi-talk group communications system, multi-line electronic key telephone network, and a computer operating terminal simultaneously;
- use a computer keyboard;
- speak using good clarity, tone, volume, syntax, grammar, inflections, and modulation;
- organize, condense, and transmit large amounts of information into brief concise summaries;
- maintain logs, manuals, and reference material in accordance with agency or institution policy and with FCC regulations;
- manage time effectively;
- listen and be patient with callers in order to determine what it is they are trying to say;
- read maps, multiple computer terminals, and printouts quickly and accurately;
- deal tactfully with and work effectively with law enforcement officers, emergency response personnel, field units, agency personnel, and the public;
- work alone;

- work irregular hours, holidays, and weekends;
- listen and respond timely to instructions or requests for information;
- exercise good judgment;
- prioritize radio and telephone calls while remaining calm during emergencies and responding appropriately concerning the urgency of the situations.