

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Human Services Dispatcher

Class Code: 40390

Pay Grade: GD

A. Purpose:

Monitors, relays, and disseminates information received through the communication network of the Human Services Center by providing prompt and accurate information to maintain communications with medical/clinical staff, security staff, and other staff and to facilitate the safety and security of and customer service to patients, visitors, and staff.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Human Services Dispatcher is the first point of contact into the Human Services Center handling both external and internal communications.

The Dispatcher monitors security systems, dispatches law enforcement, accesses National Crime Information Center (NCIC) files, and operates the communications network for universities or the Capitol complex.

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. Maintains communication switchboard to receive information and to relay information to the appropriate person.
 - a. Receives telephone calls and directs them to staff.
 - b. Answers requests for general information.
 - c. Relays emergency calls to appropriate personnel or unit.
 - e. Contacts staff through an intercom system, digital pagers, and two-way radio transmission.
2. Provides customer service to visitors of the facility.
 - a. Signs in and out visitors.
 - b. Explains visitation and restricted item policy and assigns lockers to visitors.
 - c. Contacts the unit and directs visitors to the location or arranges for an escort.
 - d. Maintains sign-in logs and tracks visitors.
3. Monitors emergency/security systems and initiates emergency procedures to inform appropriate people timely and accurately.
 - a. Operates the locked doors for facility entrance and exit.
 - b. Monitors surveillance cameras and contacts security when alarms activate.
 - c. Monitors fire and trouble alarm panel, locates area of concern, and relays information.
 - d. Coordinates unit fire drills and communicates with a Minneapolis fire dispatch center when fire alarms are activated at the Human Services Center.
 - e. Monitors the code phone, assesses the situation, and initiates proper emergency procedures.
 - f. Monitors weather and initiates proper protocols in the event of a weather warning.
 - g. Maintains various log books and a shift pass down book documenting code events and other activities which occur at the Human Services Center.

4. Provides additional support to staff such as issuing and tracking cell phones; monitoring emails; checking out vehicles; tracking staff vehicles; taking sick calls from staff and assisting to find a replacement; and receiving, sorting, and delivering mail.
5. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

The position reports to the Director of Operations of the Human Services Center and typically does not supervise but may provide work direction.

E. Challenges and Problems:

As the first point of contact for visitors and as monitors for emergency/security situations, the Human Services Dispatchers are challenged to remain calm, alert, and professional in order to provide superior customer service, make quick decisions, and perform the proper procedures which includes providing clear, effective communication and accurate information to staff during stressful, hectic situations. Dealing with people who may be distraught, anxious, or irate; remaining calm and in control during emergencies; and remembering the proper procedures to follow for each type of situation is challenging.

Problems include handling and prioritizing multiple tasks and calls. This is difficult because the dispatcher is answering multiple telephone calls, relaying information, monitoring security and emergency systems, and dealing with walk-ins simultaneously.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include how to prioritize multiple calls, where to direct calls and information and how to contact personnel, what mail to forward or send back, whether or not to unlock doors, who to contact and by what means during emergency situations, when and where to dispatch security staff and police/fire department, whether a situation is routine or an emergency, and determining which protocol to initiate depending on the type of code situation.

Decisions referred include situations that deviate from procedure manuals or training, equipment malfunctions and changes, when to activate disaster plans, and whether patients can or will receive visitors.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with visitors to the facility to visit patients or deliver supplies. Other contacts include lawyers, mental health advisory board members, tribal board members, law enforcement personnel, court agents, and liaison workers from other mental health facilities who come to meet with their clients daily. Contact as needed with medical/clinic staff and security to receive assistance during emergencies.

H. Working Conditions:

The Human Services Center communications center operates and is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays and weekends; the dispatchers work rotating or multiple shifts and non-traditional hours that may require short turnarounds. Work in the communications center involves multi-tasking, sitting for extended periods of time, potential for confrontation with upset people, and participating in emergency and security situations requiring the dispatcher to remain alert and in contact with security and other staff.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- two-way radio communications systems;
- radio codes, procedures, and etiquette;
- switchboard console operation;
- emergency and fire notification system;
- basic computer operations, including Microsoft software;
- stress and conflict management techniques.

Ability to:

- type quickly and accurately;
- operate computers, radio, telephone, and paging equipment;
- initiate appropriate protocols based on different situations;
- determine appropriateness of unlocking magnetic locked security doors throughout the facility;
- multitask;
- organize and prioritize workload;
- manage time effectively;
- locate and use reference sources;
- follow instructions;
- pay attention to and be patient with callers;
- communicate using good clarity, tone, volume, syntax, grammar, and inflection/modulation;
- study multiple computer terminals and printouts quickly and accurately;
- accurately remember information;
- maintain various visitor logs, code books, and a shift pass down book;
- deal tactfully and establish and maintain effective working relationships with coworkers, agency employees, and the general public;
- remain calm in tense or emergency situations;
- make logical decisions and exercise good judgment;
- work independently;
- work irregular hours including holidays and weekends.