



**Association of Public-Safety  
Communications Officials, International**

***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
Training Standard for Communications  
Officers***

**Adopted  
August, 2003**

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## **Introduction**

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International, Inc. is the world's oldest and largest not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. With more than 15,000 members around the world, APCO International exists to serve the people who manage, operate, maintain, and supply the communications systems used to safeguard the lives and property of citizens everywhere.

APCO International's mission reflects the importance of the organization and its breadth of activities as they relate to membership needs. Our mission is to:

- Foster the development and progress of the art of public safety communications by means of research, planning, training and education;
- Promote cooperation between towns, cities, counties, states, and federal public safety agencies in the area of communications;
- Represent its members before communications regulatory agencies and policy-making bodies as may be appropriate; and through its efforts strive toward the end that the safety of human life, the protection of property and the civic welfare are benefited to the utmost degree; and
- Aid and assist in the rapid and accurate collection, exchange and dissemination of information relating to emergencies and other vital public safety functions.

## **Background & Purpose**

The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

APCO International supports the purpose and initiatives of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the federal agencies, such as Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, charged with establishing and enforcing compliance standards for governmental entities.

APCO International also recognizes that, despite the fact that this legislation was passed into law in 1990, many public safety agencies still struggle to comply with these requirements. For this reason and because we support full accessibility to public safety services and programs, APCO International established an ADA Task Force on August 15, 2002 to conduct a needs assessment for our membership related to providing services to people with disabilities. As a result of that needs assessment, APCO International has developed the following Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Training Standard for Communications Officers.

## **ADA Task Force**

The participants of the task force were chosen to represent a broad range of membership, based on their expressed interest in ADA issues, and includes:

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## **Application**

Through the use of this standard, APCO International is encouraging all of its chapters and members to develop timely, up-to-date and comprehensive training programs that will prepare communications officers to effectively and appropriately interact with people with disabilities during emergencies and non-emergency encounters.

## **Training Program Administration & Management**

### **Training Development**

This standard is designed to assist local and state chapters/agencies in developing a comprehensive training program for communications officers for effectively providing equal access to emergency services to people with a variety of disabilities. This is a minimum 8 hour training standard; therefore, agencies should consider their individual needs and add to this standard for purposes of their local training program. However, guidance has been provided on minimum training time recommendations, instructional methods, instructor/student ratios, equipment needs and resources.

## **Training Delivery**

The Department of Justice in its performance standards for compliance with the ADA mandates that each agency provide initial comprehensive training to those personnel who may have contact with individuals from the public who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have speech impairments. It is desirable that personnel do not take calls from the public alone prior to the successful completion of TTY training in accordance with this standard. Additionally, this standard recommends training communications officers about a variety of disabilities rather than only those related to communications (deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired) because APCO International recognizes the special needs of all people with disabilities and the limited availability of information on how these other disabilities may impact an emergency call for service.

Further, the Department of Justice's Technical Assistance manual indicates each agency must provide refresher training at least as often as they require or offer training for voice calls, but at a minimum, every six months.

Refresher training is most effective when it is designed and delivered as a compliment to initial training, not simply a repeat of the exact same information in the exact same format. Therefore, it is recommended that special planning and consideration be given to the use of this standard as the basis for refresher training. Refer to Appendix C for recommendations of topics to be used as refresher training and some ideas for the enhancement and delivery of training material in a refresher format.

And, in keeping with this standard and ADA requirements, training coordinators should ensure that any training programs developed and delivered based on this standard are fully accessible to people with disabilities. Consideration should be given to registration processes to allow for identification of special needs of any attendees and subsequent arrangements should be made to accommodate those special needs requests.

## **Training Evaluation**

Effective training evaluation is critical to successfully implementing this standard and ensuring the communications officers are fully prepared to properly handle calls and other interactions with people with disabilities. It is recommended that appropriate cognitive and performance-based evaluations be conducted to ensure students understand and can apply the information addressed throughout this standard. Refer to each standard for recommendations on whether evaluation of that individual standard can be best accomplished through cognitive and/or performance-based evaluation. The recommended minimum passing score should be no less than 70% but should reflect the minimum passing scores required of similar communications training within your area.

## **Documentation & Record Keeping**

It is critical that communications agencies and/or chapters keep accurate and up-to-date training records of each communications officer and that both initial and refresher training be conducted in accordance with the guidelines established within this standard. These records are subject to review by Department of Justice in the case of complaint, lawsuit or audit.

### **Individual Training Records**

Detailed records of all training attended by each individual communications officer should be kept within the agency. Those details should include:

1. Name of Trainee
2. Name of Training Class
3. Number of Training Hours
4. Test scores
5. Certificate of Completion or other proof of attendance

### **Agency/Chapter Training Records**

Agencies conducting training related to this standard should also maintain training files, which document the following:

1. Name of the Seminar/Course
2. Number of Training Hours
3. Name and Social Security Number of all Instructors
4. Course Schedule
5. Copy of Lesson Plan taught or detailed information as to what was taught
6. Copy of any related course materials such as handouts, scenarios, etc.
7. List of all attendees including pass/fail designation
8. Courses longer than 4 hours should include an Attendance Roster initialled by each attendee for morning/afternoon/evening attendance

### **Training Standard Format**

The following standards are divided into topical modules. Each module will list a performance standard and the enabling objectives to accomplish the identified performance standard. Following the enabling objectives will be recommendations related to:

- **Methods of Instruction** – For each objective, there are several possible types of instructional methods. Typically, a combination of methods which generate student interest and increases student activity is most effective.
- **Instructor/Student Ratios** – Although there is an instructor/student ratio recommendation with each objective, it is important for training coordinators to recognize that the instructor/student ratio are directly affected by the type and size of the training facility being used, the types of instructional methods employed and the instructor’s experience and preference based on the learning environment.
- **Type of Training Facility** – Traditionally an academic classroom facility is most appropriate for training purposes. However, many times these facilities are not readily available to PSAPs for training purposes which requires the use of make-shift classroom facilities. It is critical that the training environment be conducive to effective learning. Consideration should be given to lighting, seating arrangements, and equipment use that ensures that students can see and hear the instructor and training aids.
- **Media or Equipment** - Training results in more effective learning and longer retention when more of a student’s senses are stimulated. Consideration should be given to using a variety of training aids, media and equipment such as flip charts, overhead slides or data projection equipment, screens, TV/VCR and TTY equipment. The availability and inclusion of certain equipment may affect the instructor/student ratio as explained above.

- **Total Module Time (minimum)** – Since this a minimum training standard, in order to comply with this standard, training programs must at least meet this time frame. However, it is recommended that training coordinators consider their local training needs in conjunction with instructional methods to determine the most appropriate amount of time for the training which may exceed the minimum established time for each module.
- **Evaluation Method** – As indicated within each module, there are recommendations for evaluation methods. Written examinations are used to improve the learning process because it identifies gaps between learning and the instruction. They also aid students by providing incentives to learn and by reinforcing their learning through feedback. Great care must be taken to insure that written examinations are valid, comprehensive and differentiating in order to be able to attach any real value to the grades provided. Performance examinations are extremely helpful in measuring specific skills when students demonstrate a measurable proficiency level under controlled conditions. However, training coordinators should recognize the importance of valid, realistic skills test development which reliably measures a student’s ability to perform certain tasks under specified conditions. Sufficient time must be included in the number of training hours in order to effectively administer/evaluate performance examinations. Additionally, performance examinations will usually require a higher instructor to student ratio than that which is necessary in a classroom environment.
- **References and Resources** – The references and resources found throughout this document are included as a starting point for anyone who wishes to develop a training program related to this standard. It is highly recommended that training coordinators conduct comprehensive research when developing training programs and identify multiple sources of information which support their teaching points. Likewise, these links are likely to change over time so the use of search engines is also recommended.

Following the training standards section will be several appendices, which will be useful in adopting this standard.





<b>2.7</b>	Describe the purpose of TTY detection equipment. (if applicable)	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.8</b>	Describe the effect of and process for managing “scrolling messages” during TTY calls.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.9</b>	Describe/demonstrate effective trouble-shooting techniques for the agency’s TTY equipment.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.10</b>	Describe the various types of consumer TTY equipment and the issues related to each for emergency call handling. 2.10.1 Standalone 2.10.2 Wireless/cellular compatible 2.10.3 Portable/compact 2.10.4 Public TTYs	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.11</b>	Identify the various methods of TTY call recognition and processing. 2.11.1 Silent calls 2.11.2 Beeping tones 2.11.3 Detection equipment 2.11.4 Voice announcer	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.12</b>	Describe/demonstrate the proper use of TTY protocols.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.13</b>	Define abbreviations commonly used in TTY calls.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.14</b>	Describe the differences between English and American Sign Language (ASL Gloss).	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY

<b>2.15</b>	Translate key phrases from English to ASL Gloss.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.16</b>	Translate key phrases from ASL Gloss to English.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.17</b>	Identify/demonstrate proper TTY call-answering techniques.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.18</b>	Identify/demonstrate proper TTY call-transfer techniques.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.19</b>	Identify/demonstrate the proper procedures for initiating a TTY call.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.20</b>	Explain/demonstrate techniques for properly handling calls from Telecommunications Relay Services.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.21</b>	Describe/demonstrate the proper techniques for responding to voice carry-over (VCO) requests.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.22</b>	Describe/demonstrate the proper techniques for responding to hearing carry-over (HCO) requests.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY
<b>2.23</b>	Identify/describe proper call documentation procedures.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard, TTY

<b>2.24</b>	Identify/describe local and/or state resources for assisting people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.	Lecture, discussion, practical exercise	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard
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Total Module Time (minimum): 5 hours

Evaluation Method: Written and/or performance examination

References and Resources: U.S. Department of Justice: ADA-Access for 9-1-1 and Telephone Emergency Services Technical Assistance  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/911ta.pdf>

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Disability Rights Office <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/e911tty.html>

Northeast Technical Assistance Center: Tips for Using a TTY  
<http://www.netac.rit.edu/publication/tipsheet/TTYa.html>

The Access Board, U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board: Using a TTY <http://www.access-board.gov/publications/usingATTY/a2.html>

## ADA Training Standard for Communications Officers

### Module III: Other Types of Disabilities and Related Issues

**Training Standard:** Given a written and/or performance examination, students will describe/demonstrate proper techniques for interaction with people who have other types of disabilities during emergencies and disasters.

<i>Standard #</i>	<b>Enabling Objectives</b>	<b>Methods of Instruction</b>	<b>Instructor/ Student Ratios</b>	<b>Facility Needed</b>	<b>Media &amp; Equipment</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Identify/describe issues and proper etiquette related to emergency response services for people with: 3.1.1 physical/visual disabilities 3.1.2 cognitive/psychiatric disabilities.	Lecture, discussion	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard
<b>3.2</b>	Identify/describe local and state resources for assisting people with: 3.2.1 physical/visual disabilities 3.2.2. cognitive/psychiatric disabilities.	Lecture, discussion	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard
<b>3.3</b>	Describe important considerations for interaction with people with disabilities who are victims of crimes and other emergencies.	Lecture, discussion	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard
<b>3.4</b>	Describe important considerations for interaction with people with disabilities who are affected by natural and man-made disasters.	Lecture, discussion	1:24	Academic Classroom	Overhead or Data projector Flip Charts Chalkboard

Total Module Time (minimum): 2 hours

Evaluation Method: Written examination

References and Resources: American Red Cross, Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities:  
<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.pdf>

Independent Living USA Home Page  
[www.ilusa.com](http://www.ilusa.com)

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime: First Response to Victims of Crime Who Have a Disability  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/firstrep/2002/welcome.html>

## **Appendices**

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

<i>Terminology</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Acoustic Coupler</i>	<i>The rubber cups which hold the telephone handset on the TTY.</i>
<i>American Sign Language</i>	<i>Language expressed through hands and body movements to express concepts rather than complete sentences. In its written format, the grammatical structure is different than standard English.</i>
<i>American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII)</i>	<i>This standard defines the code for a character set to be used for information interchange between equipment of different manufacturers and is a standard for data communications over telephone lines. In the context of TTY, it refers to both a binary code and modulation method used for 110/300 baud TTY communications.</i>
<i>ASL Gloss</i>	<i>The reference to "ASL gloss" is when American Sign Language is communicated through typing - as on a TTY - and many of the visual elements crucial to clear communications are lost.</i>
<i>Baudot code</i>	<i>A five bit encoding scheme that represents text and digits. It is the standard transmission signaling scheme used by TTY devices.</i>
<i>Communications Impaired</i>	<i>A person who is deaf, hearing impaired, or speech impaired.</i>
<i>Direct Connect</i>	<i>This is a method of connecting a TTY directly into the phone line. When using direct connect, you can dial directly from the keyboard and use auto-answer features.</i>
<i>GA</i>	<i>Means "go ahead."</i>
<i>Hearing Carry Over (HCO)</i>	<i>A method which utilizes both voice and text communications on the same call, allowing a person who is speech impaired to listen to the other party's conversation and respond by typing via a TTY or other means of text communications.</i>
<i>Prelingual Deafness</i>	<i>The loss of hearing before the development of language skills.</i>
<i>Q or QQ</i>	<i>Indicates a question.</i>
<i>SK</i>	<i>Means "stop keying."</i>
<i>SKSK</i>	<i>Means "stop keying, stop keying." This officially ends a TDD conversation.</i>
<i>TDD</i>	<i>Telecommunications Device for the Deaf.</i>
<i>Text Telephone</i>	<i>Another term, since a TTY is used by other than deaf people.</i>
<i>Teletypewriter (TTY)</i>	<i>Also known as TDD. A device capable of information interchange between compatible units using a dial up or private-line telephone network connections as the transmission medium. ASCII or Baudot codes are used by these units.</i>

<i>Voice Carry Over (VCO)</i>	<i>A method which utilizes both voice and text communications on the same call, allowing a person who is hearing impaired to speak directly to the other party and receive response via a TTY or other means of text communications.</i>
<i>XXXXX</i>	<i>Indicates an error or mistake in typing.</i>

## **Appendix B: Phone-Pal Programs (Test Call Programs)**

### **What is a Phone Pal Program?**

The U.S. Dept. of Justice requires PSAPs to provide consult with and outreach to people with disabilities.

The term "Phone Pals" was coined in Texas some years ago for their TTY program, but, like many brand names, the words have become a generic description of any program where the PSAP works with the Deaf community. So no matter what it is called in your area, or what you want to call it -- we are all talking about the desire for the PSAP to reach out to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, and assure them that 9-1-1 works for them. It also helps the PSAP to do a better job.

The concept is very simple. The 911/TTY Phone Pal volunteers make weekly test calls to the PSAP. These calls are made randomly (tones/silent and varying times) to each shift. The calls are kept short so as not to interfere with any emergency calls. The caller always informs the dispatcher that it is a test call immediately, and if the dispatcher cannot take the call at that time (being sure it is a test first), s/he simply hits a canned message or types "BUSY SK". The TTY user then disconnects, documents, and tries again later. A typical TTY test call should not take more than a couple of minutes.

#### **Examples of Similar Pal - type Programs**

"We worked with both our hearing impaired community and our state agency. We set up a meeting and training session for an afternoon in our training room. The state agency brought along a simulator as well as several TTY's for our staff to practice with. We sat down across from a member of the group and exchanged TTY messages and learned the proper way to answer, ask questions and other slang which they may use. After this training, we took all but the state representative into the 911 center, we then had the state representative place a 911 call on the TTY. Our staff handled the call just as if it was an actual call and the members were able to see 1) what we receive when the call comes in, 2) what our 911 system is capable of, and 3) gain the confidence that our staff understands this system and will handle calls efficiently. We also have a stand alone unit which we tested and demonstrated as well."

"Our staff got extra training in TTYs and our hearing impaired community gained the confidence that both their emergency and non-emergency calls would be answered and handled as any other call."

"The meeting [with volunteers] went well and everyone learned something that day. We also left an open invitation to anyone who may move into the community and has questions to visit our center."

### **How to Start YOUR Phone Pal Program**

What comes first.... the chicken or the egg? Sometimes that is difficult to define. This page attempts to put the process in a logical order. However, this is NOT set in stone. You should manage your process in a way that works for you!

Once you understand what the Phone Pal Program can do for you, you are ready to tackle the facets involved in establishing a program. This will involve some preliminary work, as well as "real-time" efforts.

## **Organization**

- 1) Develop a Strategic Plan
- 2) Define the Jurisdictions (create regions or boundaries)
- 3) Establish Goals

## **Plan Your Program**

- 1) Develop a Job Description for Volunteers
- 2) Develop Reports
  - to Committee Chair
  - Test Call Agreement
  - Test Call Procedures
  - Test Call Logs

## **Training Issues**

This program will only be successful if your volunteers and call-takers have an understanding of the goals of the program. Additionally, volunteers need a basic level of understanding about 9-1-1 and how it works. The following methods have been successfully accomplished in Texas and other states.

### **1) On Individual Basis**

This would be where the organizer of the Phone Pal program conducts one-on-one training for someone who joins the group late or needs a refresher course.

### **2) Committee or Statewide Workshops**

Grants were obtained to cover the entire cost of bringing in all committee members to a central location to conduct a 2-day comprehensive training once a year. This provides not only opportunity to update on issues and refresh memories, but it gives the committee members a chance to interact and learn from each other as to what is working in the respective areas.

### **3) Regional Training (Deaf Community AND 9-1-1 Personnel)**

This training is important for both the committee and 9-1-1 personnel to be able to interact face-to-face. Each group learns more about each other and therefore, improves relations and the success of the program. It could be held in conjunction with a state APCO or NENA conference.

## **Meetings**

Regularly scheduled meetings are imperative to the success of the program. Some areas hold monthly meetings where they turn in all of their logs and paperwork, where others hold quarterly meetings. You may want to also look at what events are occurring within the Deaf community and tie in a committee meeting during that event, if your members are located at a great distance from each other. Also, your state probably holds an Association of the Deaf Bi-Annual Conference that you may be able to tap into.

## **Finding Volunteers**

You may think this is the hardest part of the entire process, but there are many resources available to you. Access4911.org gives you a place to start. A simple answer would be for you to look in your telephone directory for services for the Deaf. Here are other areas to look.

- 1) State Agencies that have services for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf-Blind
- 2) Organizations of the Deaf
  - Deaf Clubs
  - Associations of the Deaf
- 3) Interpreting Services Agencies
- 4) Independent Living Centers (sometimes referred to as Centers for Independent Living)
- 5) Churches providing services for the Deaf
- 6) Schools and Universities that serve the Deaf

The key will be to find the "gatekeepers" of the community. This will be a person or people who are considered leaders within the community and have attained respect from those they work and socialize with.

You will need to explain WHAT you are trying to accomplish before asking who they would recommend. You may need to allow your first contact to help recruit. In other words, you may not be given direct contact information immediately. So be prepared to leave the information and wait for someone to contact you.

Another approach would be to ask permission to be put on a meeting agenda, where you could explain about 9-1-1 services and the Phone Pal Program before soliciting volunteers.

Always be prepared to provide for Interpreting Services although some organizations may provide interpreters for you. Depending on the location and length of the presentation, you may be required to contract 1-2 interpreters. Check with your local interpreter provider for policies and cost so that you can budget accordingly.

## **Ready - Set - Go? ..... Things to Think About!**

- 1) Extend Invitations

Be aware that an organization serving the Deaf may not be willing to give you their mailing list but may be willing to handle the mail out if you will cover the cost.

- 2) Organize a Meeting
  - Make sure the facility is ADA accessible and conducive to visual communications (i.e. position of speaker not backed to a window without drapes or blinds)
- 3) Select a Chair or Co-Chairs
- 4) Determine how you want to set your program up
  - Identify one person per county
  - OR one person per PSAP
- 5) Determine points of contact, for each volunteer, at the PSAP level
- 6) Get approval from the local 9-1-1 agencies to work as a team. This may require something in writing to cover liability to both parties.
- 7) Put together your information packet, to include but not be limited to:
  - 9-1-1 Terms (Glossary for reference)
  - History of 9-1-1
  - 9-1-1/TTY Program Description
  - 9-1-1/TTY Test Call Procedures
  - Test Call Log
  - Info on Emergency Procedures used by the Relay service
- 8) Funding needed for Committee efforts (see Volunteers)

## Volunteers

In any organization made up of volunteers, who in many cases are unpaid and without any substantial budget, it is important to provide motivation. Although this program provides a win-win for PSAPs and the community, thanking them may not be enough. We must look for ways to keep them motivated and to stay active on the committee. Some ideas that have been successfully practiced are:

- Always have food during committee meetings (pizza, donuts, etc.)
- Provide 9-1-1 related give-aways to volunteers
- Create a Phone Pal T-Shirt and give to each volunteer
- Provide a 'scholarship' to 9-1-1 conferences for training
- You may need to provide a TTY for the purpose of mobile testing

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST..... BE PATIENT. As many will tell you, this is not a quick process, but the value it adds to your agency is without question. Once implemented, you will be addressing the needs of your community with a quality level of service.

## **This is a SAMPLE test call procedure for your Deaf volunteer:**

1. You may make test calls by dialing 9-1-1 or xxx-xxxx (the administrative line).
2. Test calls can be made any time during the day or night, although we suggest that no test calls be made between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m (or your time specific busy hour).
3. Once 9-1-1 has been dialed, you can tap a key on the TTY keyboard five times then wait for the PSAP to answer with a canned message, (911 WHAT IS YOUR EMERGENCY Q GA).
4. You should immediately identify yourself and tell them "THIS IS A TEST CALL". This will work the same way if the test call is being made on the administrative phone line.
5. Remember, they may have to hang up suddenly or put you on hold if a true emergency call comes in.
6. Make a test call last only a few minutes. We want the dispatchers to become familiar with using the TTY, but it is also important to understand that they have other job duties as well.
7. Following an agreed upon time frame, where you are tapping a key to notify the call taker it is a TTY call, begin random "silent calls." This is where you dial 9-1-1 and do NOT tap a key. Call takers are required to check a "silent call" with their TTYs. At this point you will document if you tapped a key or it was a "silent call."





# Volunteer Agreement

When establishing your Phone Pal Program, and because making 'false' calls to 9-1-1 is illegal, you will want to have the structure and guidelines written out for both the PSAP and the Volunteer.

This can be something very basic or something as complex as the legal agreement that is found below. The agreement below was required as a result of previous legal actions taken against the PSAP and they determined this to be prudent for their situation.

You must use your judgment as to whether your agency really needs to have a legal document. However, reading it WILL help you develop your program structure and what needs to be discussed with your volunteers by reviewing the Agreement below.

## Volunteer Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT is made at (city), (state), as of \_\_\_\_\_ and between CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ ("ENTITY"), and \_\_\_\_\_, an individual ("VOLUNTEER").

### I. Recitals

WHEREAS, VOLUNTEER wishes to participate, without compensation, in Phone Pals, a program using deaf volunteers to provide ENTITY'S Public Safety Answering Point staff with more experience communicating with deaf and hard of hearing in the use of the TTY machine; and

WHEREAS, ENTITY wishes to have VOLUNTEER make test phone calls, with the use of a TTY machine, to its Communication Center to assist ENTITY'S Public Safety Answering Point staff to maintain their proficiency in the use of a TTY machine.

Now, therefore, it is agreed between the parties as follows:

### II. Definitions

**Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP):** An answering location for 9-1-1 service calls originating in a given area. A PSAP may be designated as primary or secondary which refers to the order in which calls are directed for answering. Primary PSAPs respond first; secondary PSAPs receive calls on a transfer basis and generally serve as an answering location for a particular type of emergency call (i.e., fire or EMS). PSAPs are staffed by employees of a common bureau serving a group of entities.

**TTY Machine:** A telecommunication device for deaf and hard of hearing people. It is designed for the deaf and hard of hearing to communicate over telephone lines.

**Test Call:** A TTY initiated phone call by a volunteer to a PSAP to enable PSAP staff to maintain proficiency in the uses of the TTY machine.

**Test Call Log:** Written documentation of test calls made by a volunteer to a PSAP. (see Exhibit A.)

### III. Agreement

#### A. Responsibilities of ENTITY

1. Provide VOLUNTEER access to ENTITY'S Public Safety Answering Point staff.
2. Provide VOLUNTEER with necessary information to conduct the Phone Pal training of Public Safety Answering Point staff.
3. Provide VOLUNTEER with necessary documents to record Phone Pal phone calls.

4. Provide VOLUNTEER with self addressed, stamped envelope for the purpose of submitting the "Test Call Log" data to ENTITY.
5. ENTITY will designate a Phone Pals Coordinator as the main contact for VOLUNTEER.
6. ENTITY will meet with VOLUNTEER on a quarterly basis.

B. Responsibility of VOLUNTEER

1. VOLUNTEER shall receive no compensation, nor be entitled to any benefits, from ENTITY for providing the services described below. VOLUNTEER shall personally perform their obligations under this Agreement. It is understood and agreed that VOLUNTEER is an independent contractor and that no relationship of employer-employee exists between the parties hereto for any purpose whatsoever.
2. VOLUNTEER will make a minimum of one (1) completed test call per shift per week for the term of the Agreement.
3. VOLUNTEER will make test calls according to the following procedures:
  - a) a call will be initiated by VOLUNTEER on a TTY machine;
  - b) ENTITY'S Public Safety Answering Point staff will answer the call and type "GA" in response;
  - c) VOLUNTEER will identify himself or herself by typing in his or her full name;
  - d) VOLUNTEER will indicate that the call is a test by typing "THIS IS A TEST CALL";
  - e) if the Public Safety Answering Point staff cannot take the call at that time, they will type "BUSY SK" and the call will be terminated;
  - f) if the call is terminated with "BUSY SK" then VOLUNTEER will need to try again;
  - g) if during a test call it must be terminated to respond to an emergency call, then the Public Safety Answering Point staff will type "BUSY SK" and VOLUNTEER will need to call back; and
  - h) all information obtained by VOLUNTEER with regard to the test call shall be recorded in the Test Call Log.
4. A completed test call will be comprised of the following components:
  - a. The call-taker recognizes that the caller was using a TTY.
  - b. The call was transferred successfully to the Secondary PSAP (when appropriate).
  - c. The conversation included at least 4 questions/statements between the call-taker and the Phone Pal.
  - d. The conversation lasted at least 45 seconds.
5. VOLUNTEER will record all calls on the "Test Call Log" sheet and agrees that the "Test Call Log" is ENTITY'S property and shall be treated as confidential information pursuant to Article IV, Paragraph 8.
6. VOLUNTEER shall mail, by the fifth of each month, the "Test Call Log" sheets to ENTITY at the following address:
7. VOLUNTEER'S concerns, complaints, problems, questions or other comments regarding the training and or any aspect of the Phone Pals Program shall be immediately brought to the attention of ENTITY'S Phone Pal Coordinator. The Phone Pal Coordinator may be contacted at:

TTY: \_\_\_\_\_

VOICE/TTY: \_\_\_\_\_

VOICE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. General Provisions

1. VOLUNTEER Not Agent. Except as ENTITY may specify in writing, VOLUNTEER shall have no authority, express or implied, to act on behalf of ENTITY in any capacity whatsoever as an agent.
2. Assignment and Subcontracting Prohibited. No party to this Agreement may assign or transfer any right, or obligation or responsibility pursuant to this Agreement. Any attempt or purported assignment of any right, obligation, or responsibility pursuant to this Agreement shall be void and of no effect. VOLUNTEER shall not subcontract the performance of any of VOLUNTEER'S obligations or responsibilities pursuant to this Agreement.
3. Term and Termination. The term of this Agreement shall be from \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_. The agreement may be extended with written agreement of the parties. VOLUNTEER shall be terminated if he/she does not make the required number of test calls, fails to comply with the test call procedures outlined above or violates any provision of this Agreement. Either party may terminate this Agreement for its convenience upon giving written notice, at the addresses stated below, to the other party. Upon termination by either party or the natural expiration of the term, VOLUNTEER shall immediately cease rendering Services pursuant to this Agreement and shall immediately deliver to ENTITY all materials, Entity Information or any other property or information provided to VOLUNTEER by ENTITY.
4. Entire Agreement. This document contains the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes whatever oral or written understanding they may have had prior to the execution of this Agreement. Any and all modifications or amendments to this Agreement shall be in writing and executed by both parties.
5. Severability. If any portion of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement shall not be affected thereby and shall be enforced to the greatest extent permitted by law.
6. Waiver. Waiver by either party of any default, breach or condition precedent shall not be construed as a waiver of any other default, breach or condition precedent or any other right hereunder.
7. Enforcement of Agreement. This Agreement shall be governed, construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Litigation arising out of or connected with this Agreement shall be instituted and maintained in the courts of \_\_\_\_\_ County in the State of \_\_\_\_\_, and the parties consent to jurisdiction over their persons and over the subject matter of any such litigation in such courts, and consent to service of process issued by such courts.
8. Confidentiality of ENTITY Information. Volunteer agrees that he/she will not, either during or after the term of this Agreement, make public or disclose to any third party any information regarding the work, operations, or procedures of ENTITY or any other agencies which comprise ENTITY'S Public Safety Answering Point. All such information shall hereinafter collectively be referred to as "Entity Information." Entity Information includes, but is not limited to, Test Call Logs; all notes used to compile Test Call Logs or to document Public Safety Answering Point staff responses to Test Calls; all evaluations of Test Calls; written procedures or policies of ENTITY; training or operational practices and manuals of ENTITY; and all other information relating to the work, operations, or procedures of ENTITY or any other agencies which comprise ENTITY'S Public Safety Answering Point. VOLUNTEER acknowledges and agrees that all Entity Information is valuable, special and unique assets of ENTITY and that Entity

Information is strictly confidential. VOLUNTEER agrees that he/she will not at any time duplicate the Test Call Log or any other Entity Information, or, either directly or indirectly, divulge, disclose or communicate orally or in writing any Entity Information to any third party without the prior written consent of ENTITY. VOLUNTEER may comply with an order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction to submit Entity Information for the court's review or to release Entity Information to a third party. VOLUNTEER'S unauthorized release of Entity Information shall be deemed a material violation of this Agreement and will justify ENTITY'S entitlement to legal and/or equitable relief.

9. Release. In consideration of being permitted to participate in ENTITY'S Phone Pal program, VOLUNTEER hereby agrees to release, waive, discharge and covenants not to sue, under state or federal law, ENTITY for any loss, damage or injury to property of VOLUNTEER, whether known, unknown or unanticipated at the time of this release or in the future, due to the negligence and/or omissions of ENTITY, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers which arise from, are in consequence of or are related to VOLUNTEER'S participation in the Phone Pal program, whether suffered off of or while on or about ENTITY premises and/or facilities or while using ENTITY'S equipment. VOLUNTEER hereby expressly waives all rights or benefits which they may now have or in the future may have under the provisions of Section \_\_\_\_ of the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

VOLUNTEER further expressly agrees that the foregoing release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

VOLUNTEER has read/understands and voluntarily signs this Agreement.

Executed as of the day and year first stated above.

CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

VOLUNTEER

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

This agreement was communicated in the communication mode of volunteer's choice.

Document translation provided by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy City Attorney

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

*\*Information on Phone Pal Programs based on information compiled by Toni Dunne and located on her website at [www.access4911.org](http://www.access4911.org).*

## **Appendix C: Recommendations for Refresher Training**

The Department of Justice's document entitled "ADA-Access for 9-1-1 and Telephone Emergency Services Technical Assistance" calls for refresher training every 6 months. However, it does not specify how much training (content or length) should be provided on the 6 month basis. The exact wording is *"PSAPs should require or offer refresher training at least as often as they require or offer training for voice calls, but at a minimum, every six months."* (pg. 9)

Refresher training is most effective when it is designed and delivered as a compliment to initial training, not simply a repeat of the exact same information in the exact same format. Therefore, it is recommended that special planning and consideration be given to the use of this standard as the basis for refresher training. Trainers should remember that the point of training is to change behavior and improve skills, not simply to meet a time requirement. Students will experience a more comprehensive transfer of knowledge, skills and abilities when motivated trainers design refresher training which stimulates all of their senses. Therefore, trainers should consider some other methods of instruction rather than lecture to engage students in the learning environment. Below is a summary of other instructional methods which may be considered:

**Independent Study** - If your center receives regular TTY calls, then you may only need to provide written refresher information. This can be done in the form of articles or study sheets. To break up the routine, you may also want to consider developing word puzzles and/or quizzes to evaluate the employee's retention of the information. The information should be documented for each employee.

**Instructional Methods** - If your center and/or call takers do not handle TTY calls on a regular basis, then attending a structured classroom refresher may be more appropriate. For classroom training which is new and refreshing, consider the following delivery methods:

**Guest Speakers** – Invite representatives of people with a variety of disabilities to come present information to your employees.

**Demonstrations** – Most students will retain information which is shown to them through demonstration. New technologies/equipment lends itself to this method as well as step-by-step procedures.

**Case Study** – Student involvement can be generated through the use of realistic problem/situation case studies. This is especially beneficial with legal issues.

**Simulations/Role Play** – Through the use of structured, real life scenarios, a student's cognitive knowledge and their ability to apply appropriate procedures can be evaluated in a non-dangerous, non-threatening environment. Mistakes can be identified and readily corrected through this method of instruction.

### **Refresher topics:**

Below are some recommendations of topics to be used as refresher training and some creative ideas for the enhancement and delivery of training material in a refresher format.

- TTY call recognition & processing
- Handling VCO & HCO requests
- Procedures for TRS calls
- Legal updates
- New technologies
- Disability Awareness (a review of physical, visual and communications-related disabilities)
- TTY protocol, abbreviations and etiquette
- English vs. ASL Gloss
- Alzheimer's Awareness
- Aphasia & Other Stroke-related Conditions
- Disasters & People with Disabilities
- Crimes Against People with Disabilities