



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

# **Safety Concerns and Other Deficiencies at the U.S. Park Police's Dispatch Operations Center in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area**



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**MANAGEMENT ADVISORY**  
**OI-SI-21-0171-W**

During our review of the U.S. Park Police's (USPP's) radio recording system in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area (WMA), we identified significant safety concerns and other deficiencies at the USPP's dispatch operations center (dispatch center).<sup>1</sup> Based on USPP documents we reviewed and USPP personnel we interviewed, as well as our own observations at the facility, we found that the condition of the dispatch center's workspace and equipment undermines its ability to achieve its core public safety mission.

The issues we identified included:

- A dilapidated workspace with holes in the roof. These holes have allowed birds to enter and leave droppings on the computer equipment and office furniture and water to leak into the workspace, which has damaged the carpet.
- A black substance throughout the workspace, including on the ceiling and around the air vents, which employees suspect is black mold.
- Outdated and deficient equipment that lacks critical safety features. These items include telephone equipment that does not have enhanced caller ID or other features to allow the USPP to determine the location of callers or return calls if a caller is disconnected, and recording equipment that has not been configured to allow for instant playback of public safety radio or phone communications as required by U.S. Department of the Interior policy.
- Longstanding staffing and training deficiencies, including an insufficient number of employees staffing the dispatch center at times and a complete absence of formal dispatch training for some dispatch personnel.
- Failure to establish minimum standards and critical guidance for its dispatch center as required by Department policy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We initiated our review of the USPP's radio recording system after we learned that the USPP had not recorded its radio communications during the events that occurred in and around Lafayette Park on June 1, 2020. As part of our review, which focused on the dispatch center covering the WMA, we interviewed current and former dispatch center managers, dispatch center supervisors, USPP personnel working in the dispatch center, and the current chain of command overseeing the dispatch center, including the former Acting Chief and current Chief of the USPP. We also toured and took photographs of the dispatch center on several occasions.

<sup>2</sup> With respect to the equipment, staffing, and training issues raised in this management advisory, we were not able to definitively conclude whether the USPP was in compliance with relevant Department policy. As described below, the policy states dispatch centers must be "adequately" equipped and staffed, and dispatchers must be "trained professionals." The policy does not, however, further define those requirements. As we explain in more detail below, the evidence we reviewed showed that the USPP faces serious and longstanding challenges in meeting those minimum standards regardless of how they might be defined.

These issues jeopardize the safety of officers and the public and create liability risks for the USPP.

In light of the issues identified in this management advisory, we make four recommendations. We recommend that the USPP (1) assess the workspace and equipment concerns identified in this management advisory and develop a corrective action plan with appropriate milestones to resolve them, (2) establish minimum staffing requirements to meet the Department's mandate that dispatch centers be "adequately staffed" and develop a corrective action plan to meet those requirements, (3) establish and implement dispatcher training and any certification requirements mandated by Department or bureau policy, and (4) establish and implement any additional written procedures for its dispatch centers as required by Department policy.

## **Background**

The USPP is a unit of the National Park Service (NPS) and is generally responsible for law enforcement across NPS properties in the WMA. As USPP documents establish, the USPP's radio system and its dispatch center personnel provide the backbone for the support infrastructure required to facilitate accurate, real-time communication and decision making for USPP officers and ensure officer and public safety.

The WMA dispatch center operates 24 hours a day and is located in the USPP's Anacostia Operations Facility in Washington, DC. Dispatchers' responsibilities include managing the USPP's radio communications between USPP law enforcement personnel and with other Federal, State, and local agencies; deploying and tracking personnel and equipment; monitoring hundreds of emergency alarms located across NPS properties in the WMA; and coordinating emergency law enforcement, medical, and fire assistance for incidents reported by officers and the public.

The USPP's dispatch center generally does not receive direct emergency phone calls from the public.<sup>3</sup> It does, however, receive emergency 911 calls that are transferred by other jurisdictions' 911 centers when the emergency is occurring within the USPP's jurisdiction. This jurisdiction spans several hundred square miles across Federal parklands in Washington, DC, Virginia, and Maryland, including the National Mall, urban parks, and highly trafficked major roadways.<sup>4</sup> Emergency calls can include reports of medical emergencies, criminal activity, and traffic accidents. As one officer told us, in many cases, USPP dispatch center personnel are the "*first* first-responders" to learn of an emergency and determine what resources are deployed to address it.

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<sup>3</sup> The USPP dispatch center in the WMA may sometimes receive direct emergency calls if a caller dials the phone number for the dispatch center, which is posted on some signs in parks located in the WMA and on the USPP's website, or if a caller uses one of the emergency phones available in some areas. The dispatch center can also receive direct calls via a nonemergency phone number.

<sup>4</sup> The USPP also has dispatch centers in New York, NY, and San Francisco, CA. Our office's work regarding the USPP's radio recorder and dispatch center issues focused on the dispatch center in the WMA.

*The USPP Investigated a Complaint About the Dispatch Center Referred by the Office of Inspector General in December 2020 but Did Not Take Further Action*

In December 2020, our office referred a complaint we received to the USPP. This complaint raised concerns regarding equipment, staffing, and training issues in the WMA's dispatch center. After conducting four interviews, the USPP's Internal Affairs Unit completed its investigation in March 2021. In its final report, USPP Internal Affairs stated it did not identify any violations of USPP policies. The report also determined that Internal Affairs should take no further action and did not discuss NPS or Department policies or whether a lack of those policies contributed to the concerns raised in the complaint. Internal Affairs did find that the complaint raised "safety hazards," which it recommended referring to the USPP's force safety officer, and listed recommendations provided by the dispatch personnel it interviewed. We found, however, that Internal Affairs did not provide this report to the USPP's force safety officer, USPP leadership, or dispatch personnel. This was described to us as an "oversight."

As discussed below, according to dispatch personnel with whom we spoke, the safety issues raised in the December 2020 complaint remain ongoing concerns.

*Department Policy Mandates Minimum Standards for Dispatch Centers*

Under Department policy 446 *Departmental Manual (DM)* 16, titled "Law Enforcement Radio and Telecommunications Systems," dated March 9, 2016, and its corresponding "Law Enforcement Handbook," dispatch centers are required to have adequate equipment and staffing and to be operated by trained professionals.<sup>5</sup> The policy also requires law enforcement bureaus to establish and implement procedures consistent with all the requirements in 446 *DM* 16 and the handbook. Where applicable, we reference these standards below.

## **Findings**

*The Condition of the Dispatch Center's Workspace and Equipment Undermines Its Ability To Achieve Its Core Public Safety Mission*

According to 446 *DM* 16, dispatch centers must be "adequately . . . equipped." This phrase is not further defined in the policy, but regardless of how the USPP might construe this requirement, information we received and our observations at the dispatch center showed that the dispatch center's workspace and equipment were substandard. These deficiencies undermine the dispatch center's ability to achieve its mission and present serious safety concerns for USPP officers in the field, personnel who work in the dispatch center, and the public.

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<sup>5</sup> The version of 446 *DM* 16 posted in the Department's central online policy repository, the Electronic Library of the Interior Policies, is dated October 2000. However, the Department's Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES), which manages this policy, implemented an updated version of the policy in March 2016 that is available on its Law Enforcement Portal and accessible to Department personnel. The 2016 version is labeled as "Interim," but the OLES' policy website states that interim policies are "in effect" and have been approved by the OLES Director. We refer to the current 2016 version when discussing 446 *DM* 16 in this management advisory.

### *Substandard Workspace*

Based on our interviews and review of USPP documents, as well as our observations at the facility, we identified longstanding concerns regarding the dispatch center's workspace that continue today. For example, in connection with a 2019 USPP internal proposal to contract out dispatching services or move to a new location (which was not adopted), a USPP contractor technician stated that the facility housing the dispatch center was “old, poorly constructed, [did]n’t meet many industry requirements, [and] [wa]sn’t conducive to the Association of Public Safety Communication[s] Officials (APCO) standards.”<sup>6</sup> In late 2020, a USPP executive command official stated in an email after touring the facility that he was “embarrassed” by the state of the dispatch center and that he would work to make the space “comfortable and safe.”<sup>7</sup> Those views are consistent with other comments we heard regarding the dispatch center's workspace.

More recently, flocks of birds entered the dispatch center, server rooms, and adjacent offices through holes in the roof; as a result, computer equipment and office furniture were covered in bird droppings. Dispatch center personnel also reported that, despite prior repairs, the building's roof continues to leak when it rains, which risks damaging critical computer equipment and has damaged the carpet. These employees also pointed to a substance that they suspect is black mold throughout the space, including in the air vents. (See Figures 1 through 4 for photos of these issues.) Dispatch center personnel have further said that if the dispatch center loses power or equipment fails, they do not have a dedicated emergency backup location where they could relocate and be fully operational.

**Figure 1: Bird Droppings in a Dispatch Center Office (July 1, 2021)\***



\* This image has need modified for public release

**Figure 2: Suspected Mold on Ceiling of Dispatch Center (Sept. 27, 2021)**



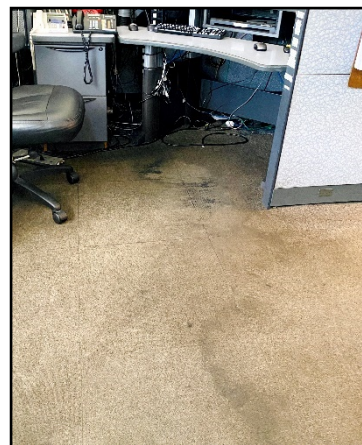
<sup>6</sup> The Association of Public Safety Communications Officials is a national public safety communications organization that develops industry standards and serves as an educational and training resource for public safety and law enforcement agencies.

<sup>7</sup> The dispatch center manager stated, however, that no significant improvements have been made in the workspace since that tour.

**Figure 3: Suspected Mold on Ceiling of a Dispatch Center Office (Sept. 27, 2021)**



**Figure 4: Water-Stained Carpet in Dispatch Center (Sept. 27, 2021)**



### *Substandard Equipment*

Dispatch center personnel raised several concerns that indicate the USPP is relying on outdated and unreliable equipment and technology in the dispatch center. First, according to the dispatch center manager and other personnel, the dispatch center has outdated phone equipment that lacks critical features, including enhanced caller ID and the ability to have multiparty calls, which are needed to perform dispatch operations safely and effectively. USPP dispatch personnel told us that, without those features, USPP dispatchers are generally unable to automatically determine the location of public callers, return calls if the caller is disconnected, ensure calls transferred to other dispatch centers are transferred successfully, and confer with third-party translators to ensure effective, real-time communication with callers who do not speak English.<sup>8</sup>

Second, dispatch center personnel informed us that USPP officers' radios have an emergency button they can press to signal to the dispatch center if they are in trouble, but they also told us that dispatchers do not have the capability to automatically identify which officer has activated his or her emergency signal. Instead, dispatch center personnel must manually review separate lists of numerical radio identifiers to determine which officer is assigned to the radio emitting the emergency signal. Dispatch center personnel also reported that, in some instances, the radio identifier list is inaccurate or incomplete, which has required time-consuming roll calls across all on-duty USPP officers to determine the officer using the radio that is emitting the emergency signal.<sup>9</sup> This situation presents a safety risk that dispatch center personnel will be unable to identify USPP officers in danger in a timely fashion. According to the dispatch manager, the USPP has the software needed to automatically identify emergency signals, but it has not installed that software.

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<sup>8</sup> Under 446 DM 16, dispatch centers “must be able to communicate with callers in the languages predominately spoken in each [dispatch center’s] geographic service area.”

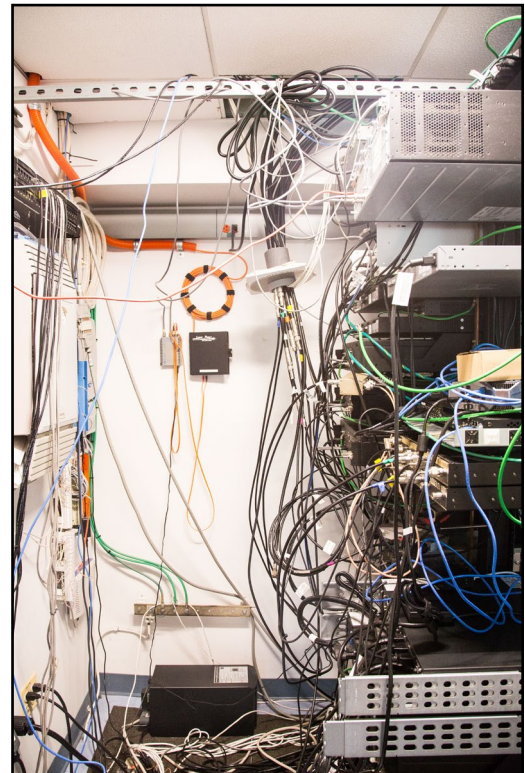
<sup>9</sup> Under 446 DM 16, the USPP is responsible for “maintaining a current inventory . . . and physically accounting for all law enforcement telecommunications equipment” and must “maximize officer safety by using telecommunications technology to keep track of [law enforcement officers], especially those assigned to remote locations.”

Third, dispatch center personnel told us that the dispatch center is responsible for monitoring security system alarms from NPS properties across the WMA that report issues such as trespassing, burglary, and fire, but these same individuals told us that only one of the dispatchers has the ability to login to the system at that dispatcher's console. These witnesses stated that the only way other dispatchers can monitor the alarms is to check a separate computer that is in an adjacent room behind a closed door and that, at times, the USPP has had to rely on the NPS to monitor its alarms. We were told that these issues have led to delays in assessing and responding to possible security breaches and fires. For example, in January 2022, the USPP did not identify that a waterflow alarm had been triggered in a historic building in Arlington National Cemetery after a sprinkler pipe broke. The alarm should have led dispatch personnel to notify the local fire department and relevant park staff, but the alarm went unnoticed, resulting in flooding that damaged the building and historical artifacts.

Fourth, although required by 446 *DM* 16, dispatch personnel told us that they do not have the ability to instantly playback radio or phone communications.<sup>10</sup> This capability may be particularly important during emergency situations in which an individual is disconnected or otherwise unable to repeat what was said.

Lastly, USPP dispatch personnel reported that the electrical circuits in the dispatch center are overloaded on a daily basis, which at times results in the temporary failure of critical radio and computer equipment. USPP documents showed that a third-party inspection of the facility in 2018 found that it also had inadequate fire suppression equipment, which, according to dispatch center staff, has not been fixed. Additionally, the wires connecting the USPP's radio and computer systems are haphazardly organized and not labeled (see Figure 5), which has led personnel to disconnect important systems inadvertently and prevented them from efficiently troubleshooting electrical issues. In June 2021, a power failure in the dispatch center affected the radio and phone recorder; although the recorder had a backup battery, the issue was not identified until the battery had completely depleted. As a result, any radio transmissions and phone calls that occurred during that time were not recorded as required by 446 *DM* 16.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 5: Dispatch Center Server Room (Sept. 27, 2021)**



<sup>10</sup> Under 446 *DM* 16, “[a]utomated recording equipment must be in place in [dispatch centers] to provide for continuous recording and instantaneous playback of all public safety radio transmissions as well as all incoming public safety telephone calls.”

<sup>11</sup> Radio and phone call recordings are routinely requested as important evidence in criminal cases, and not having them could potentially prejudice those prosecutions.

USPP personnel told us that they have plans to address some of the workspace and equipment issues identified above, but most of these plans have not been implemented. For example, the dispatch center manager stated that the USPP has examined upgrading its phone system but must wait for the NPS to complete an agencywide upgrade process that may take several years. The dispatch center manager also stated that the NPS obtained funds to purchase some new equipment for the dispatchers, but the NPS had not yet completed the purchase and that, even if it had, any new computer equipment could not be installed at the current facility without upgraded electrical circuits. While we confirmed that the interior space was cleaned of the bird droppings, dispatch staff told us the holes in the roof are still there, and as recently as November 2021, birds continued to enter the dispatch center and leave droppings on dispatcher equipment.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Dispatch Center Faces Serious Staffing and Training Deficiencies*

Under 446 DM 16, dispatch centers must be “adequately staffed.” There is no definition of “adequate” staffing in the policy, nor has the USPP itself implemented a policy defining that requirement. Nevertheless, the evidence we reviewed indicated that the USPP’s dispatch center has faced significant staffing challenges for years. In a July 2015 NPS study regarding the USPP’s dispatch and IT divisions, the NPS reported that the USPP has had difficulty hiring and retaining dispatchers.<sup>13</sup> In a November 2019 USPP presentation to NPS IT staff, the USPP stated that the dispatch and IT divisions were “barely getting by” and explained that, “due to [the] inability to hire dispatchers, we’re taking LE [law enforcement] off the streets to cover [the dispatch center].”

The evidence we reviewed shows that staffing in the dispatch center has continued to be a significant challenge in recent years. Dispatch personnel told us that at one time full staffing for the dispatch center was considered four dispatchers and one supervisor per shift, but, more recently, that has been reduced to three dispatchers and one supervisor per shift. Dispatch personnel reported to us, however, that there have been sometimes as few as two people staffing the dispatch center. The USPP has also extended the shifts dispatchers work to 12 hours or more and increased reliance on overtime and personnel from other USPP units to fill in as dispatchers, some of whom are not trained dispatchers. We reviewed emails in which dispatch personnel informed USPP leadership that dispatch center staffing was in “crisis” and that the lack of staffing prevented the USPP from meeting industry standards and posed a liability for the USPP.<sup>14</sup> USPP staff have also complained that understaffing has led to a lack of adequate

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<sup>12</sup> After we provided the draft version of this management advisory to the USPP, dispatch personnel reported that the NPS placed wire screens over the holes where the birds had been able to enter the building until the holes could be repaired. Personnel also reported that there had not been further leaks in the dispatch center ceiling following other recent repairs.

<sup>13</sup> According to the study, titled *USPP IT and Communications*, the NPS focused on the IT and communications (now known as dispatch operations) divisions because “the [IT] and Communications function is essential to the officer’s ability to receive calls, transmit information, capture and analyze incident information, and make timely decisions.”

<sup>14</sup> In a January 2020 document discussing the potential consolidation of the USPP’s dispatch center with another law enforcement agency’s dispatch operations, the dispatch center manager stated that the USPP was not processing calls quickly enough to meet standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association. The manager stated that those standards recommended that 80 percent of calls be processed within 60 seconds and that 95 percent of calls be processed within 106 seconds.

supervision of dispatchers—they reported that some dispatchers have been seen sleeping or playing video games while at work.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, 446 DM 16 mandates that dispatchers be “trained professionals and certified as required by bureau policy.” The policy does not further define what training or certifications would meet this standard.<sup>16</sup> Dispatch center personnel we interviewed and USPP documents we reviewed showed that while some dispatchers have received formal public safety dispatcher training, some of their certifications have expired and others have never received any formal training. Dispatch personnel also expressed concern that some individuals do not have the training or capacity to effectively handle the radio or take emergency calls but have nonetheless been permitted to work in the dispatch center against the recommendation of the dispatch manager. According to an October 2, 2020 training memorandum the dispatch center manager provided to USPP command staff, the type of on-the-job training currently provided to dispatchers “makes for a dangerous situation for our police officers and civilian callers.” The manager also stated in the memorandum that the USPP’s dispatchers are “substandard in their dispatch skills.” The evidence also showed dispatchers do not receive emergency medical dispatcher training even though the dispatch center regularly receives emergency medical calls.

USPP leadership has stated that having trained dispatchers is “mission critical” and that they have recently set aside funds to send dispatchers to be trained by industry experts in the coming months. The dispatch manager told us, however, that as of the beginning of February 2022, no dispatchers have received this training, and others reported that lack of sufficient personnel has affected the USPP’s ability to send dispatchers to training. Some USPP personnel are scheduled to receive training later in March 2022.

*The USPP Has Not Established Minimum Standards and Other Critical Guidance for Its Dispatch Center in Accordance With Department Policy*

Under 446 DM 16 regarding dispatch centers, all Department law enforcement programs must “establish and implement procedures” consistent with that policy and the “Law Enforcement Handbook” attached to the policy. Although the USPP is a law enforcement program within the meaning of the policy, it has not established the required procedures. As a result, the USPP has not established minimum standards and other critical guidance for its dispatch center. For example:

- The USPP does not have a written policy or procedure defining the roles and responsibilities of dispatchers, including standards establishing minimum requirements for qualifications, staffing levels, training, and equipment in the dispatch center. The USPP’s only policy does not contain critical information on dispatchers’ qualifications

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<sup>15</sup> The USPP has made some efforts to hire additional dispatchers, including hiring two dispatchers in December 2021. According to dispatch personnel, however, reaching full staffing would require hiring approximately 10 to 15 additional dispatch staff. USPP personnel have also stated that a lack of competitive pay and the condition of the dispatch center negatively affects hiring and retention.

<sup>16</sup> Although not applicable to the USPP, we note by way of comparison that NPS policy states that all dispatchers “[m]ust have a training plan, with goals of proficiency before working without direct supervision, and of meeting national standards.” NPS, *Reference Manual-9*, Ch. 40 § 3.4, “Dispatch Services and Computerized Information Systems” (Mar. 2015).

and duties. Instead, this document from 1999 primarily addresses issues such as basic procedures for communicating by radio or phone and grooming and leave requirements.

- Under 446 *DM* 16, the USPP is required to have agreements with local jurisdictions to define the procedures for transferring emergency calls to the USPP, but the USPP has not entered into any such agreements or established any related internal procedures.

The dispatch manager told us that he has raised his concern that the USPP lacks policies for the dispatch center with his chain of command and circulated an NPS dispatch policy used by NPS law enforcement rangers, which provides detailed guidance for dispatch centers.<sup>17</sup> The dispatch manager said, however, that the USPP dismissed his suggestion to use the NPS policy because it explicitly states that it does not apply to the USPP.<sup>18</sup> While we found that USPP leadership and dispatch staff have discussed the lack of policies for the dispatch center, none have been implemented to date.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the issues identified above, we recommend that the USPP:

1. Assess the workspace and equipment issues identified in this management advisory (including the bird infestation, leaks, and suspected mold, as well as the inadequate phone system, emergency radio identifier process, alarm monitoring, instant playback of radio and phone communications, and electrical system) and develop a corrective action plan with appropriate milestones to resolve them
2. Establish minimum staffing requirements to meet the Department's mandate that dispatch centers be "adequately staffed" and develop a corrective action plan to meet those requirements
3. Establish and implement training and any certification requirements that meet the Department's mandate that dispatchers be "trained professionals and certified as required by bureau policy"
4. Establish and implement any additional written procedures as required by 446 *DM* 16 and the corresponding "Law Enforcement Handbook"

## **NPS Response Summary and Office of Inspector General Reply**

We provided the NPS a draft of this management advisory for review and comment. The NPS concurred with all four recommendations and stated that it will work to implement them. We revised our final report as appropriate to reflect additional information obtained from the NPS

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<sup>17</sup> NPS, *Reference Manual-9*, Ch. 40, "Dispatch Services and Computerized Information Systems" (Mar. 2015).

<sup>18</sup> The policy states it "applies to all employees involved in the National Park Service (NPS) law enforcement program, except the US Park Police (USPP), who are covered by General Orders." NPS, *Reference Manual-9*, Ch. 1 at 1, "Law Enforcement Program" (Mar. 2015).

and USPP in their response and from other NPS sources. The full text of the NPS response is included as Appendix 1.

**Recommendations 1 and 2:** Regarding the facility, equipment, and staffing issues at the dispatch center, the NPS described forthcoming actions by an internal working group. According to the NPS, this working group will assess the identified issues and then develop a corrective action plan with target milestones for completion. Regarding current staffing levels, the NPS stated it believes the current staffing level of three dispatchers and one supervisor per shift is adequate. However, as discussed in our management advisory, the evidence showed that the USPP has sometimes not met that staffing level and, even when it does, has often had to rely on staff who are not trained dispatchers as required by Department policy. As stated in recommendation 2, the USPP should develop a corrective action plan to ensure it can meet its minimum staffing levels per shift with qualified personnel.

**Recommendation 3:** Regarding the training and certification of dispatcher staff, the NPS stated that the USPP has an established dispatcher training program and that, going forward, the USPP will track completed trainings in the Department's online training system. We note, however, that our findings identified concerns other than a failure to track dispatcher training. As stated in our management advisory, the evidence we obtained showed a complete lack of training for at least some dispatch personnel, and the USPP could not provide records that any current dispatcher had completed the training program referenced in the agency's response. As stated in recommendation 3, the USPP should take steps to ensure that its dispatchers receive training and are certified in accordance with bureau policy.

**Recommendation 4:** Regarding the lack of written procedures on training, staffing, and equipment in the dispatch center, we note that the NPS provided a target implementation date of November 1, 2022, and that we consider this target completion date to also apply to recommendation 3.<sup>19</sup>

We consider the actions planned by the NPS to be responsive to our recommendations. Based on the NPS' responses, we consider the recommendations resolved but not implemented. The recommendations will remain open until we determine that sufficient corrective actions have been taken to warrant closure. We will follow up with the NPS to obtain additional information regarding its proposed working group members, as well as target implementation dates for all outstanding actions, and will continue to monitor the NPS' planned corrective actions until they have been fully implemented.

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<sup>19</sup> Although recommendation 3 does not list a proposed completion date, we consider the target completion date for recommendation 4 to also apply to recommendation 3 because both relate to establishing and implementing minimum training and certification requirements.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20240

To: Mark Lee Greenblatt  
Inspector General

From: Charles F. Sams III  
Director, National Park Service

Re: Draft Management Advisory – Safety Concerns and Other Deficiencies at the U.S. Park Police’s Dispatch Operations Center in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area Case No. OI-SI-21-0171-W

The National Park Service (NPS) has reviewed the draft Office of Inspector General report entitled, Draft Management Advisory – Safety Concerns and Other Deficiencies at the U.S. Park Police’s Dispatch Operations Center in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area Case No. OI-SI-21-0171-W. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the referenced report, we take these matters seriously and are working to ensure their resolution.

Below are the responses to the specific recommendations, including steps the NPS has taken or will be taking to address the concerns raised.

**Recommendation 1: Assess the workspace and equipment issues identified in this management advisory (including bird infestation, leaks, suspected mold, as well as the inadequate phone system, emergency radio identifier process, alarm monitoring, instant playback of radio and phone communications, and electrical system) and develop a corrective action plan with appropriate milestones to resolve them.**

The NPS concurs with this recommendation. The Chief of Police along with other NPS leadership conducted a site visit of the Dispatch Operations Center (DOC). The focus of the visit was to ensure that a safe workspace free from negative environmental impacts were maintained. Prior to this report a crew remedied concerns with leaks in the space. The National Capital Parks-East staff has been working with a contractor to mitigate the bird infestation and make the necessary repairs to the building.

In addition, an overall site plan evaluation will be conducted with an internal working group consisting of NPS employees, including U.S. Park Police (USPP) and others, and outside agency personnel subject matter experts. The group will look at three primary options:

- a. Upgrading the current location of the USPP DOC to include adding the required power source, air conditioning for the various IT components, and new dispatch consoles.
- b. The feasibility and cost of moving to more appropriate space within the existing Anacostia Operations facility.

- c. Entering into an agreement with the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) to use space held by the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency.
  - i. The majority of the systems used by the USPP DOC are Washington, DC based systems that are already established at the OUC.

The working group's first task will be a timeline for their recommendations, including the required corrective action plan with milestones. The team will also review and make recommendations on identified equipment issues.

**Recommendation 2: Establish minimum staffing requirements to meet the Department's mandate that dispatch centers be "adequately staffed" and develop a corrective action plan to meet those requirements.**

The NPS concurs with the recommendation. The USPP currently has a minimum staffing mandate of 3 primary dispatchers with 1 supervisor scheduled 24 hours a day. This staffing levels appears to be adequate based on the call volume and service requirements. However, the above referenced working group will examine staffing levels as a part of the overall evaluation of the DOC operations. Meanwhile, to ensure the staffing levels of personnel assigned to the DOC are sufficient, an open and continuous vacancy announcement will be published to ensure sufficient levels are maintained according to the attrition rate. This has been approved by the Servicing Human Resources Office and is currently being implemented. In addition, the USPP hired two dispatchers in December 2021.

**Recommendation 3: Establish and implement training and any certification requirements that meet the Department's mandate that dispatchers be "trained professionals and certified as required by bureau policy."**

The NPS concurs with the recommendation. The USPP has an established Law Enforcement Dispatcher Training Program and Completion Review criteria. In order to ensure that all dispatchers complete this Training Program it will be recorded and tracked in DOITalent and controls will be put in place for regular review of compliance. Additional training for dispatchers is scheduled for FY22 through APCO International Inc. The APCO training is the Public Safety Telecommunications Course which specializes in training for emergency dispatchers. The newly hired dispatchers are currently in the Dispatcher Training Program as well as scheduled for the APCO training.

**Recommendation 4: Establish and implement any additional written procedures as required by 446 DM16 and the corresponding "Law Enforcement Handbook".**

The NPS concurs with the recommendation. The current USPP Guideline Manual (GM) for Dispatch Operations will be updated. There will be significant updates to include minimum training standards and certifications for new employees, recurring and advanced training requirements for current employees, staffing levels and specific duties for each position assigned to the DOC, minimum equipment standards to include required testing cycles and monitoring of critical systems (alarms, radio, and telephone recording systems, etc.). The USPP is committed to expediting this update, and will complete the update by November 1, 2022.

## **Report Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement**



Fraud, waste, and mismanagement in Government concern everyone: Office of Inspector General staff, departmental employees, and the general public. We actively solicit allegations of any inefficient and wasteful practices, fraud, and mismanagement related to departmental or Insular Area programs and operations. You can report allegations to us in several ways.



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