



VIRGIN ISLANDS EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTERS



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“9-1-1 what’s the nature of your emergency?” Those are the words in a variety of accents that will echo from the microphones of a 9-1-1 operator when calling in to an emergency call center (ECC) to report or request emergency assistance. 9-1-1 centers are vital parts of the territory’s emergency response mission. 9-1-1 is the universal emergency number and the only lifeline between the public and the first responders when there is an emergency.

During an emergency, someone hurriedly dials 9-1-1 for assistance and usually takes for granted that a dispatcher on the other side of the line is patiently waiting for the call, and after assisting the caller, the dispatcher kicks back and waits for the next emergency call. Not so! On the other side of that line dispatchers are working at a very stressful, often thankless job. They put in long hours performing complex tasks. While taking calls, they must enter data into the computer, talk to units in the field, and at the same time observe one or more other monitors. They are highly skilled at multi-tasking.

Dispatchers are not simply robotic creatures answering calls, but they are real people who care about the community. They are truly the first responders and the first voice of comfort we hear when we call 9-1-1, panicked and in a crisis. They remain alert and always ready to react. Having been a police officer, I have always fully appreciated the job of the dispatchers because our very lives depended on the competence and professionalism of the dispatchers.

For forty years, 9-1-1 has served as the vital link between the American public and emergency services. Public education and awareness initiatives throughout the years have contributed in large measure to the incredible and ongoing success of the emergency communications system as a whole. (NENA.Org-2013).

It is with great privilege and pleasure that I share in extending congratulations to all VITEMA ECC operators, as well as other operators throughout the United States and the region as they celebrate the month of April as National 9-1-1 education month.

VITEMA’s 9-1-1 call operators continue to serve with unwavering commitment to our citizens and visitors alike. Congratulations!

Visit the [National 9-1-1 Education Coalition website](#) for more materials and resources!



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