

Watauga County Officials Explain Training for 911 Operators in Response to Today Show Feature

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Telecommunicators with the Watauga County Sheriff's Office must go through extensive training to field emergency calls.

Watauga County's Assistant Telecommunications Chief David Hill said some communications divisions across the country aren't as forward thinking and progressive as Watauga County. NBC's Today Show featured a special report last week on 911 operators and specifically mentioned a lawsuit in Murphy, Texas in which a mother is suing the Town of Murphy because she doesn't feel the 911 operator did an adequate job in helping her try to save her son's life.

He said Watauga's telecommunicators are well trained and competitively compensated to a level that attracts the most dedicated applicants.

Hill said that although several states don't require that 911 operators be trained in CPR, North Carolina, and specifically Watauga County, makes sure operators are CPR certified. Hill said telecommunicators are also prepared through a yearlong training and certification program.

Hill said Watauga County Sheriff's Office telecommunicators answered an average of 3,400 genuine 911 calls and over 23,000 administrative calls before the snow and ice events in December. Hill added that many 911 operators slept and ate in the 911 Center for several days during the ice storm.

The Today Show's special report can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/yae2ahx>.