

HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

2377 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE

Cincinnati, OH. 45231

I-275 MASS VEHICLE ACCIDENT AFTER ACTION REPORT

January 21, 2013



On the morning of January 21st, 2013 the weather conditions in Hamilton County presented motorists on I-275 near the Colerain Avenue with extremely difficult driving conditions. At approximately 11:36 a.m. the Hamilton County Communication's Center began receiving 9-1-1 calls related to multiple auto accidents on I-275 at the 35.8 mile marker with possible injuries.



Within minutes the staff on duty at the County's Communications Center quickly became inundated with calls for assistance. Reports indicated that 30 - 50 vehicles were involved. Police, Fire, and EMS resources were dispatched from Colerain Township, Forest Park, Fairfield, Ross, Harrison, Wyoming, Springdale, and the Hamilton County Sheriffs office. The Hospital Net was opened and the local Hospitals were called and advised on ETA's for incoming patients and their conditions.



The responding units performed multiple vehicle extractions, triaged numerous injuries, and transported critical victims to area hospitals. The large volume of vehicles involved and the frigid conditions presented challenges for the first responders and the tow vehicles attempting to remove the wrecked vehicles. Both lanes of I-275 were closed for nearly 5 hours while the interstate was cleared. The incident required more than 50 tow trucks and heavy duty wreckers to be sent to the scene by the Communications Center staff. The Ohio Department of Transportation was called to deliver sand and salt, and Metro Buses were requested to the scene to keep the individuals involved warm.



INCIDENT STATISTICS

VEHICLES INVOLVED: **80**

DEPARTMENTS RESPONDING: **8**

(28 Police / 10 Fire / 18 EMS)

INJURIES: **30**

FATALITIES: **1**

TOTAL 9-1-1 CALLS: **43**

(between 11:36 am - 11:42 am)

TOTAL RADIO TRANSMISSIONS: **2,784**

TOTAL RADIO PUSH-TO-TALKS: **6,276**



SUPERVISORS NOTES / INCIDENT TIMELINE

DATE: January 21st, 2013

Prepared By: Shari Toelke; Dispatch Supervisor

- 11:35 am - A Cleves Police Chief traveling eastbound on I-275 advised Communications Officer Dana Layton (Operating the West Police Radio) that he observed a 5 car crash with a jackknifed semi-truck on the west-bound lanes. He was unable to stop but thought there were possible injuries.

Communications Officer Layton initiated a police and fire detail and dispatched police to the scene.

Communications Officer Don Hensley (Operating the Fire Dispatch Radio) dispatched Colerain Township Fire Department to the scene.

- 11:36 am - The Communications Center begins receiving numerous calls about the accident. Motorists reported that 30 - 50 vehicles may be involved. Communications Officers' Layton and Hensley relayed the information to the responders and promptly dispatched additional units to the scene.
- 11:36 am - Communications Officer Barrett Cohen (Operating a 9-1-1 Call Position) took a call from a citizen at the scene reporting that there was a child injured in the median and not breathing. He began relaying CPR instructions to the caller while incoming units were advised.
- 11:42 am - By this time the Communications Center had received (43) 9-1-1 calls regarding this incident and the first units had arrived on scene.

Communications Officer Keith Nottingham (Operating the Central Police Radio) dispatched additional Police units from Springfield Township, Wyoming, and Forest Park.

Communications Officer Hensley dispatched additional Fire and EMS at the request of the Fire Command at the scene. He was assisted by Communications Officer Angie West (Operating the Fire East Radio) who called Ross Township for assistance (Ross is not dispatched by the County Comm. Center). Calls were also made to ODOT for salt and sand vehicles, to local area hospitals advising of incoming patients, and to METRO for buses to house those involved.

Communications Officer Angie West (Operating the Fire East Radio) assisted the Fire West Radio Operator and opened the Hospital Net following a call from Warren County reporting a multi-vehicle accident in their area.

Supervisor Linda Fox and Communications Officers' Amy Roloson and Barrett Cohen called 29 tow companies who sent more than 50 wreckers to the scene, with an estimated 80 vehicles towed.



BEHIND THE CALL

By: Barrett Cohen

I'm often asked what intrigues me the most about my career. Without question, I can tell you that it's the moments of uncertainty that make this career fascinating for my colleagues and me. When my phone rings, I don't know if the person on the other end is requesting an officer for a vehicle lockout or if it's a mother calling about her son in a cardiac arrest. Monday, January 21st, 2013, is a day I will never forget.



It was a routine winter morning. Skies were partly sunny with no threat of inclement weather. The day started like most others as I sat with my trainee, reviewing the material covered the previous day. As a training officer, I take few calls as most of the day is spent monitoring my trainee's phone skills. The first four hours passed quickly with little deviation from an average day. Of course, average for us might not be average for your normal Mon-Fri, 8-5 job. At 11:35, things quickly changed.

The phones began ringing. They continued to ring and as a 14-year veteran, it was apparent to me that something big was happening. As I accepted that first call, I noticed, on the security camera, that snow was falling outside. On the other end was a man, obviously stunned, detailing the condition of a young girl he came across after an auto accident on I-275 in Colerain. His voice was shaking; his fear evident. Sammy Reagan was 12 years old and she wasn't breathing. As a father of two (ages 3 and 5) and another one on the way, my heart sank. I was immediately thrust into panic mode as I envisioned my own children being face down in the snow and not breathing, as this Good Samaritan described young Sammy. Despite the rash of emotion building inside, I had a job to do. I immediately asked if anyone on scene was able to administer CPR. It was clear to me that, even though we had a volunteer firefighter on scene, they would need help with instructions.



Behind the Call (Continued)

I remember vividly hearing a hysterical voice crying repeatedly, "Sammy, it's me, Mommy. Sammy, it's Mommy, wake up!" I remained on the phone and assisted Good Samaritans in administering aid until the Colerain Paramedics arrived. The call was over, but the memory is not. As I drove home that afternoon, I kept hearing that voice, "Sammy, it's Mommy." Later that evening, as I sat at home with my own children, I learned that Sammy would not survive. Shortly thereafter, I also learned that she was a member of the Kings Community. I have lived in Landen for 7 years and have broadcast football games for Kings High School for many years. Little did I know, just 8 hours earlier, the girl whose life I was trying to help save, would be a neighbor whose mutual friends lived on my street.

As a 9-1-1 Communications Officer, I am honored to work with so many people who embrace the day to day emotional rigors this job entails. We are a proud group of people who are the unsung heroes of the emergency chain. You won't hear about us rescuing a resident from a burning home or taking down a suspect in a hostage situation. No, we are that calm voice a person hears on the other end when they experience the worst event of their life. We often bear the emotional trauma long after the call. We do it because we care.

From now on, I'll do it for Sammy.

Respectfully,

Barrett Cohen
Communications Officer
Hamilton County Communications Center



HANDLED WITH SKILL AND PROFESSIONALISM

This was the largest vehicle crash in Ohio history, and it was handled with skill and professionalism. Special Commendation has been given to the following staff on duty at the Hamilton County Communications Center who received the 9-1-1 calls, dispatched resources to this incident, and managed the additional requests for service and assistance.

Shari Toelke; Supervisor

Linda Fox; Supervisor

Roger Moore; Comm. Officer

Patty Craven; Comm. Officer

Alicia Jim; Comm. Officer

Ron Paquette; Comm. Officer

Tami Buttrees; Comm. Officer

James Kasee; Comm. Officer

Ann Finnen; Comm. Officer

Angie West; Comm. Officer

Dana Layton; Comm. Officer

Barrett Cohen; Comm. Officer

Don Hensley; Comm. Officer

Keith Nottingham; Comm. Officer

Amy Roloson; Comm. Officer



COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD:

"Not sure who was on the Central and West today, but they did an awesome job during that accident. I listened to a lot of it on AW10. They really did a good job keeping everything together. Just wanted to say Good Job!" **Rob Dunaway, Arlington Heights Police**

"Hats off to Colerain Township Fire Department and the Hamilton County Communications Center. Great job by all!" **Mike Scherer, Green Township Fire Department**

"Tell the West and Fire Dispatchers Great Job! I'm sure all the Hamilton County Communications Center dispatchers were involved with the crash on I-275. Kudos for keeping the situation in control."

Dan Fritz, North College Hill Police Department



County of Hamilton

Board of County Commissioners



LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Presented to:

THE ON DUTY STAFF OF JANUARY 21ST 2013

Roger Moore
Ron Paquette
Ann Finnen
Keith Nottingham
Amy Roloson

Patty Craven
Tami Butree
Angie West
Barrett Cohen
Shari Toelke

Alicia Jim
James Kasee
Dana Layton
Don Hensley
Linda Fox

At 1135 on January 21st a snow burst came through the Colerain Township area and caused a chain reaction crash on I-275 which involved over 80 vehicles, numerous injuries and 1 fatality.

The professional expertise of the staff on duty at this time ensured that all police and fire units were dispatched in a swift and seamless manner.

Thanks to Dana Layton who worked the west radio, and also monitored Area Wide 10;

Keith Nottingham who worked the Central radio, dispatching additional police units and assisting with AW10; Alicia Jim who worked the East Radio and assisted with calling additional resources and monitoring AW10; Don Hensley who was the West Fire Operator; Angie West who worked the Fire East Radio, assisted Don as needed and opened the Hospital Net; James Kasee who assisted the fire desk by calling ancillary services such as Metro Bus and ODOT and also those fire departments who are not our radio system;

Barrett Cohen for organizing and entering wrecker requests for 80+ vehicles;

Amy Roloson for assisting in teletype and calling the wrecker companies for response;

Patty Craven for calling all wreckers on the West Rotation, at the request of police units, in order to alert them that we would soon be doing a massive wrecker callout.

And thanks to Roger, Ron, Tami and Ann not only for taking calls and relieving radios, but also making notifications as needed.

Hamilton County is fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional team of Communication Officers who possess the ability to creatively and efficiently handle any situation.

We are proud to have the opportunity to work with such a talented team of individuals.

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