



Before the Sirens: The Missing Link Between 9-1-1 and Emergency Management

Presented by: Rachel Shadle

Presentation Abstract: 9-1-1 telecommunicators are the first first responders, gathering real-time intelligence, calming callers in crisis, coordinating resources, and shaping situational awareness in the earliest and most chaotic moments of an incident. Yet despite this critical role, 9-1-1 communications centers are often left out of emergency management planning, exercises, policy discussions, and after-action reviews.

This session explores the systemic gap between 9-1-1 dispatch and emergency management and examines how this disconnect impacts operational efficiency, responder safety, public information, and disaster outcomes. Attendees will gain insight into the operational realities of public safety answering points (PSAPs), the consequences of exclusion from emergency management structures, and practical strategies for integrating dispatch into preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts.

Participants will leave with actionable steps to ensure 9-1-1 professionals have a permanent seat at the emergency management table.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the critical operational role 9-1-1 dispatch plays in disaster response and situational awareness.
2. Understand the risks and consequences of failing to integrate dispatch into emergency operations structures.
3. Develop practical strategies to include 9-1-1 leadership in planning, exercises, EOCs, and policy development.

Speaker Bio: Rachael Shadle is an emergency management professional and advocate for the integration of 9-1-1 dispatch into comprehensive emergency management frameworks. She currently serves as the State Training Officer for the Nevada Office of Emergency Management (OEM), where she leads instructor development and oversees statewide training programs for emergency management professionals and first responders. Through this role, she delivers both traditional and innovative learning opportunities to Nevada's critical infrastructure community, coordinating course delivery, ensuring compliance with national standards, and implementing new training methodologies that strengthen operational readiness across the state.

Before joining NV OEM, Rachael spent more than a decade as a 9-1-1 dispatcher, coordinating responses to major incidents such as wildfires, floods, and civil unrest. During her dispatch career, she served as a trainer for over ten years, including several years as the coordinator for the communications training program, where she supervised curriculum development and trainee progression. She holds a bachelor's degree in emergency management, along with an associate's degree in Anthropology, and is committed to incorporating cultural considerations into emergency preparedness and response strategies.