

Profile and Self-Assessment

Public safety communications experience is not a requirement to be employed as a WSP communications officer. Our agency provides entry-level communications officers with the necessary training to attain success. What we cannot give you is the personal characteristics to thrive in this very challenging environment. The attached profile and self-assessment enables you to compare yourself to the requirements and demands of the WSP communications officer. Take your time to honestly compare yourself with the statements in the self-assessment.

You are not required to return the self-assessment with your application. This is for your use only.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Washington State Patrol, Human Resource Division, at 1-800-888-8384 or (360) 704-2300.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER PROFILE

Abilities

- Must be able to type quickly and accurately a minimum of 35 wpm while conversing with callers. Skill in operating a computer keyboard is desirable.
- Speak and write English clearly.
- Ability to deal effectively with people in highly sensitive situations.
- Ability to think clearly and act quickly in emergencies.
- Ability to gather, organize, and process information from various emergency callers.
- Ability to record names and numbers rapidly and accurately.
- Ability to remember numerous details and quickly recall essential information.
- Ability to work up to 12 hours at a time, continually wearing a communications headset that will cover one ear or fit within the ear canal of one ear, and be able to still hear and understand other outside sound sources.
- Ability to read and discern visual images on a variety of media: small liquid crystal displays offering very little brightness/darkness contrast; multi-colored indicator lights with different flash rates and color, which indicate the status of electronic function; printed matter that has been reduced to less than normal size type; and computer display screens.
- Work in an environment where the ability to hear and react to multiple simultaneous sound and visual sources is critical.
- Ability to work in an environment where all conversation and work is continuously recorded and is constantly subject to live monitoring or later review and critique.

Physical and Psychological Working Conditions

The communications officer:

- Plays a critical role in public safety service delivery.
- Has to sit and observe a computer display screen for long periods of time.
- Must take information from callers who may be excited, abusive, foul-mouthed, incoherent, hysterical, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Must remain calm, show empathy, convey reassurance, and present a stable demeanor in spite of all factors.
- Must develop a sense of call interpretation and decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Must be able to condense large amounts of information into readable, sensible, typed remarks and verbally relay the same.
- Must remember numerous acronyms and codes used for computer entry describing various situations.
- Must be able to type information directly into the computer while gathering information via telephone or radio frequencies.
- In order to perform the job functions, must have adequate hearing and visual acuity, and must be able to speak

the English language coherently.

- Must be able to work in a confined environment for eight hours or more at a time.
- Must continuously demonstrate high mental and moral stability.
- Must have a reliable means of transportation that will get them to work at any time of the day or night, on weekends, and on holidays. (Communications centers operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Employees may be subject to emergency call out at any time.)

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER SELF-ASSESSMENT

It is important that you accurately and honestly compare who you are with what you may face as a communications officer. As you proceed, you will be asked to reflect on a number of situations, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics. Skills can be learned. You, however, are the only one who truly knows if you have the personal characteristics necessary to be successful as a communications officer.

Please review the statements following each job characteristic. If you disagree with any of the statements, you may want to reconsider submitting an application for the position of communications officer.

Emotional Job Environment

Work as a WSP communications officer can be emotional and sensitive. In order to be successful in this job, employees must be able to hear of serious problems and not get personally or emotionally involved, maintain a positive attitude at work, and forget about the problems when they go home. Job stress is typically created by the following conditions:

- A large number of emergency calls waiting.
- Citizens yelling at you on the telephone.
- Demands on your attention from many units at the same time.
- Waiting for calls when nothing is happening.
- Hearing complaints all day.
- Hearing a steady stream of serious crimes and accidents.
- Knowing that most victims will not have happy outcomes.

Do you agree with this statement?

I can remain emotionally detached and not take my work home.

Background Investigation

Because we are a law enforcement agency, as part of our pre-employment selection process, job applicants are required to take a polygraph and pass a thorough investigation of their background. This includes an investigation of conviction records, employment and education history, etc. Applicants may be rejected for felony and/or misdemeanor convictions, patterns of criminal behavior, drug use, etc.

Do you agree with this statement?

I can pass a thorough polygraph and background investigation.

Work Schedule

Communications centers operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Shift assignments and shift rotations are determined by management. Employees must be willing to work any shift (day, swing, graveyard) assigned them and many weekends and holidays.

Do you agree with these statements?

I am willing to work any shift assigned, including weekends and holidays. I am willing to work on my days off, stay over after my shift, come in early, or work an adjusted shift because of emergency situations. I am not bothered by the fact that normal social activities and educational opportunities may be limited because of shift schedules used in a 24-hour-per-day operation. I can report to work on time in any kind of weather condition.

Working Conditions

There are many working conditions in a communications center that can affect you physically and emotionally. You are restricted in your movements and confined to a limited area. As a communications officer, you are literally connected to your work.

Do you agree with these statements?

I can work in an enclosed environment with others and can successfully deal with others' personalities in close quarters. I am not bothered by being interrupted from my meals and breaks. I do not become easily bored when nothing is happening. I can remain detached or composed even when someone is yelling or using extreme profanity.

Personal Qualities and Characteristics

The following questions involve personal qualities and/or characteristics that are essential to doing a good job in public safety communications. Read each item carefully. If your answer is **no** to any of the questions, you may want to reconsider applying for this position.

- Do you have respect for authority and discipline?
- Do you have integrity and are you honest?
- Are you able to accept constructive criticism without feeling you are being attacked personally?
- Are you dependable?
- Do you get along with people you have to work with closely?
- Are you flexible?
- Do you have concern about people, particularly people you may not know?
- Do you have common sense?
- Do you have the ability to learn and apply that knowledge in an emergency?
- Are you assertive?
- Can you remain calm in a tough or emergency situation?
- Are you compassionate?
- Do you have tolerance for people who may be different from you?
- Do you see things that need to be done and do them without having to be asked?
- Do you have a positive view of yourself?
- Can you make quick, life-saving decisions?
- Can you work as a team member, regardless of your personal feelings for another team member?
- Do you communicate and relate well with others?
- Are you able to control your emotions in difficult situations?
- Are you willing to withstand harassment and verbal abuse from confused, drunk, irate, ill, or argumentative citizens?
- Would you consent to a polygraph examination and a background investigation?
- Are you willing to accept that you may not be allowed to leave the communications facility during your shift except in an emergency?
- Are you willing to agree that the integrity of the information in the communications center is vital and that any breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action or dismissal?