

Department of Public Safety  
Fees for Dispatch Services  
An Historical Outline

- 1970: DPS consolidates dispatch and offers to take on dispatch services for the myriad of disparate local agencies.
- 1992: Legislative Act 243, Sec.83 “Public Safety Dispatch”
- Creates a Vermont Law Telecommunications Fund
  - Authorizes the Commissioner of Public Safety to negotiate and initiate cost recovery for providing dispatch to non-DPS agencies and promulgate administrative rules for such.
- 1992: September 22- Comm. Walton notifies agencies that the purpose for cost recovery for dispatch is required to sustain and upgrade the communication infrastructure as well as to pay for dispatch personnel. In this notification he provides a formula to assess costs for each agency.
- 1992: At an Emergency responder Workshop a recommendation is put forth to establish a county emergency services tax intended to cover the costs for dispatch
- 1992: Proposed Rule 92-P72 provides a refined cost for service schedule. Fees are supposed to take effect in 1993
- 1993: After significant protests from municipalities and VLCT the cost recovery plan is withdrawn.
- 1996: Municipalities are notified that current dispatch arrangements will continue unabated, however, for any agency that seeks to have DPS provide dispatch from this point onward will be required to pay a fee to DPS.
- 1997: With DPS dispatch consolidation looming, non-emergency dispatch services with municipalities are terminated (water and sewer alarms, etc)
- 1997: December 17- DPS releases the “Report on Funding Mechanisms for Public Safety Radio Communications” . The document reports on various funding sources but doesn’t mention cost recovery from municipalities.
- 1998: October – DPS releases “Report on Funding Strategies for Public Safety Radio Communications” . The document proposes a number of funding strategies for the long-term, perpetual support for communications systems, including cost sharing.
- 2002: DPS puts forth a proposal to start charging non-DPS agencies a fee for dispatch commencing in 2003.
- 2002: H.410 is proposed to require dispatch services to be funded out of the Universal Service Fund., with DPS dispatching for any agency that requested it.
- 2003: May 15 – House and Senate Government Operations request DPS to convene a study on DPS dispatching and potential revenue courses.

- 2003: August 13 – VLCT, as party of the summer study committee on dispatching, distributes a survey seeking information from municipalities and emergency services on an inventories of dispatching equipment, services, and needs.
- 2003: October 8. The Ad hoc dispatch study group reports on dispatch vs. E-9-1-1 , referencing H.410. It differentiates dispatch from E-9-1-1 as separate functions, dispatch being a local responsibility; concludes that problems arising in the transfer of 9-1-1 to dispatch is not a system problem but an issue of coordination. H.410 was an effort to provide every agency with reliable dispatch.
- 2004: January- DPS releases “A Report on the Dispatching of Emergency Service Providers- An Examination of the Depth of the Problem” for the House and Senate Gov Ops committees. The report details eight (8) recommendations. One of the recommendations is to discontinue providing “free” dispatch services. The report encourages DPS to develop revenue sources for dispatch, and eliminating DPS as the default dispatch service for other agencies.
- 2005: September- A Macro Corporation report encourages regional dispatching and eliminating DPS as a free dispatch service.
- 2015: H.490 requires DPS to determine the cost of operating a dispatch center; to determine the cost as a basis for entering into contracts for service. The bill also includes a provision for county taxing authority to support dispatching, however, it provides an opt-out for municipalities.
- 2015: May 15- DPS releases a report on costs for dispatching. Subsequently a draft fee schedule is developed for agencies that are covered in full or part by DPS dispatching.
- 2015: June 25 – At a PSAP Users Group meeting at the VT Fire Academy, Captain Don Patch of VSP solicited information from the various agencies on what their future dispatch plans are – to wit- in 2016 agencies will be charged for dispatch services and agencies can continue with the fee schedule or opt out of the dispatch arrangements.
- 2016: The fee-for-dispatch plan is withdrawn. VLCT distributes a survey for municipalities on dispatch services and current cost for those services (if any).
- 2016: The legislature forms a “9-1-1 Call Taking/Dispatch Service Working Group” to recommend the most efficient, reliable, and cost-effective means for providing dispatch and call-taking.
- 2017: The working group submitted the following recommendations to the legislature:
- The Working Group recommends that the Department of Public Safety continue to provide dispatch services to non-state agencies and that it develop a fee structure outlining its costs to do so.
  - The Working Group recommends a comprehensive, professional study be conducted to identify the impacts on municipalities and the responder community of any changes that would result should the Department of Public Safety pursue its intention to discontinue providing dispatch service for non-state agencies.

- The Working Group recommends that all entities providing dispatch services be allowed to recover the cost of those services and recognizes that communities that are not currently paying fees for dispatch will need time and support to allow for budget adjustments.
- The Working Group recommends that decisions about changes to dispatch services be made at local level. In some areas, all is working well and no changes are needed to the way dispatch services are provided and funded. Individual communities are in the best position to determine the most effective solution to the provision of dispatch services, but to make those decisions they must be fully aware of their options. Where changes are needed, the Working Group recommends local authorities consider multijurisdictional partnership (regional) approach to improve efficiencies and distribute the “true cost of service” over multiple agencies/municipalities.