



Economic Impact Analysis Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

6 VAC 20-60 – Rules Relating to Compulsory Minimum Training Standards for Dispatchers **Department of Criminal Justice Services** January 12, 2001

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) has analyzed the economic impact of this proposed regulation in accordance with Section 9-6.14:7.1.G of the Administrative Process Act and Executive Order Number 25 (98). Section 9-6.14:7.1.G requires that such economic impact analyses include, but need not be limited to, the projected number of businesses or other entities to whom the regulation would apply, the identity of any localities and types of businesses or other entities particularly affected, the projected number of persons and employment positions to be affected, the projected costs to affected businesses or entities to implement or comply with the regulation, and the impact on the use and value of private property. The analysis presented below represents DPB's best estimate of these economic impacts.

Summary of the Proposed Regulation

The Department of Criminal Justice Services (department) proposes to eliminate specified minimum number of hours of training and lists within the regulations that specify general areas to be addressed in classroom and on the job training. Instead the regulations would require that dispatchers demonstrate specific performance outcomes while at a certified training academy and on the job.

Estimated Economic Impact

The current regulations require a minimum of 40 hours of classroom training and 40 hours of on the job training for law enforcement dispatchers. The regulations also list general areas to be addressed in classroom and on the job training. The department proposes to eliminate minimum hours of training and the lists of general areas to be addressed. Instead the regulations would require specific performance outcomes for dispatchers while at a certified training

academy and on the job. According to the department, training for all of the required performance outcomes will require approximately 80 hours of classroom training and 80 hours of on the job training. The regulations do leave open the option for academies to let individuals who already possess some of the required skills to test out of training for those particular skills.¹ Thus, the amount of required training time could be substantially less than 80 hours of classroom training and 80 hours of on-the-job for some dispatchers. The department conducted a survey of the training academies and found that all 17 respondents currently conduct at least 80 hours of on-the-job training, and that 12 out of 17 currently conduct at least 80 hours of classroom training.

In order to determine which tasks dispatchers should be required to demonstrate competency in, the department compiled an extensive list of potential tasks and surveyed entry-level dispatchers and their supervisors about those tasks. The following decision rules were used:²

1. Frequency: If 50% or more of the entry-level dispatcher respondents said they performed a task daily, weekly, several times weekly, or monthly, the task was included as part of the training task list.
2. Criticality: If
 - A. less than 50% of the entry-level dispatcher respondents said they performed the task once or more in the past year, but
 - B. at least 50% of the supervisory respondents indicated that inadequate performance of the task would, at minimum, produce serious consequences, the task was included as part of the training task list.

Thus, if a task would typically not be included in training on the basis of frequency as indicated by entry-level dispatchers, the task may still be included in training on the basis of criticality as indicated by supervisors. For example, the task of dispatching public safety personnel to respond to jail or prison escape did not meet the criteria for inclusion on the basis of frequency.

¹ Source: Department of Criminal Justice Services

² Ibid.

However, supervisors indicated that this was a critical task. Therefore, it is included as a required competency.

Based on the information provided by the academies on number of hours currently utilized for entry-level dispatcher training, it appears that the majority of academies are already spending a sufficient number of hours on training. Since the proposed required competencies may require some training that is not currently conducted, some expense for equipment and the training of instructors may be required for even those academies that are currently conducting a sufficient number of hours on training. The department has not collected any information concerning costs to localities. However, the department's combination of surveys and decision rules do appear to be a sound method of choosing the most important tasks to require. Having better-trained dispatchers can clearly be beneficial. For example, better-trained dispatchers may be less likely to make mistakes when handling emergency calls from the public. There is insufficient data, though, to accurately estimate those benefits. Due to the insufficient information concerning benefits of the increased training requirements and the absence of cost data, it is not possible to conclusively determine whether the proposed amendments to the regulations create net economic benefit. But the use of the survey to determine the most important tasks to require competency in will likely cause the time in training to be spent more efficiently on the most important tasks. That aspect of the proposed amendments is clearly beneficial. What is less clear is whether the benefits of the least important of the specified competencies outweigh its undetermined associated costs.

Businesses and Entities Affected

The proposed revised regulations potentially affect the 10 regional and 17 independent academies that train dispatchers in Virginia, approximately 50 instructors that provide the training and approximately 500 individuals that attend training each year.³

Localities Particularly Affected

The proposed regulatory changes affect all Virginia localities.

³ Source: The Department of Criminal Justice Services

Projected Impact on Employment

Since the majority of academies already spend a sufficient number of hours on training, the proposed regulatory change would most likely not significantly increase the number of hours that localities must employ instructors of dispatchers.

Effects on the Use and Value of Private Property

The proposed regulatory changes may result in better-trained dispatchers. To the extent that better-trained dispatchers are less likely to make mistakes and may more quickly properly handle incoming calls, damage or loss to private property may be averted. For example, a better-trained dispatcher may make it more likely that thieves are caught (through faster dispatching of law enforcement) and stolen property is recovered.