



APCO

MEMBER CHAPTER SERVICES Committee

Member & Chapter Services Poll

This month's poll will be focused on Industry Partners. We request a member from each Chapter to PLEASE participate in answering our poll questions. It will only take a few minutes and the results will be shown in next month's newsletter.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IndustryPartnersDec24>

*The Irish be with
YOU*

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Membership Information

Member Type	11/1/2023	11/1/2024
Associate Members	2,428	2,384
Full Members	4,359	4,294
Full Group Members	9,471	10,113
Online Group Members	24,093	24,361
Commercial Members	482	465
Commercial Group Members	339	350
Student/Educator Members	0	34
Total Number of Members	41,172	42,001
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,680	1,770
Commercial Groups	52	54

Commercial Advisory Committee

What Does APCO Mean to You?

Commercial Advisory Council (CAC) is excited to bring to you the latest in our video series *What Does APCO Mean to You?*

Tune in to our CAC members explaining why APCO is so important to them. They also provide insight into the value of an APCO commercial membership.

Click on the links to hear testimony from member [Eric Hagerson](#) and past member [Jenny Mason](#).

We also want to recognize and thank [Virtual Academy](#) and Kelly Sanders-Kelley for their generosity in creating and publishing these videos for our APCO Community.

Submitted by: Diva C. Miranda Jones, Senior Sales Engineer at Carbyne



Bylaws Committee

The Bylaws Committee has been actively working to review and verify changes to the Association's governing documents. Below is an update on the recent activities and progress made:

November Meeting

The Committee reviewed and verified Policy Manual (PM) edits to sections 13.10, 13.11, 13.12, and 13.16.

- These edits, which establish board limits on distinctive awards, were adopted at the September Board meeting and forwarded to the Committee Chair on October 3rd.

September Meeting

The Committee verified PM edits to sections 6.8, 7.3, and 8.4.

- PM 6.8 (KSA): KSA-related provisions were integrated into the PM following an Executive Council vote at the conference.
- PM 7.3 (Board Restrictions on Committee Service): Amendments to clarify Board members' roles on Standing Committee were approved.
- PM 8.4 (Executive Search Reforms): Proposed reforms to the executive search process were adopted unanimously.

These updates reflect the Committee's commitment to ensuring clarity and alignment within the Association's governing documents.

Awards Committee

Increase Amount of Nominations

As I conclude my sixth and final year as Chair of the APCO International Awards Committee, I'm making a fervent plea to all public safety communications agencies: Let's make this year's nominations a record-breaking success!

For far too long, many outstanding individuals and teams within our industry have gone unnoticed. It's time to rectify that. Every agency, regardless of size, has exceptional employees who deserve to be celebrated.

Awards Committee (continued)

I have personally experienced the incredible honor of being nominated and winning an APCO International award. As a member of a smaller agency, I never imagined that my work would be recognized on such a grand scale. Yet, there I was, standing alongside industry leaders and feeling a profound sense of validation and gratitude. It's time to shine a spotlight on the heroes who keep our communities safe.

Consider nominating a colleague for one of the following categories:

- Telecommunicator of the Year
- Communications Center Director of the Year
- Line Supervisor of the Year
- Trainer of the Year
- Team of the Year
- Radio Frequency Technologist of the Year
- Information Technologist of the Year
- Technology Leadership - Small Agency (1-75 employees)
- Technology Leadership - Large Agency (76+ employees)

Don't wait! Start thinking about the individuals and teams in your agency who have made a significant impact. Your nominations will help to ensure that their contributions are acknowledged and celebrated.

Let's work together to make this year's APCO International Awards the most memorable yet.

Submitted By: Jason Meeder, Assistant Supervisor – Kitsap911 Bremerton WA
APCO International Awards Committee Chair

Cybersecurity Committee

As cyber attacks become more common, more and more businesses and agencies are turning to cyber insurance to help protect themselves, their customers, and assets. With demand for insurance and claims on those policies increasing, the cost of insurance has increased dramatically. While premiums leveled off in 2023, insurers raised premiums in 2022 by roughly 50% (XL, 2024). In an effort to reduce costs and claims many insurers have implemented requirements or protections of the insured before underwriting a policy.

According to the cyber security company Keeper's website, there are currently six requirements for obtaining cyber insurance and information on how to meet each of these requirements (Trevino, 2024). These include:

- Strong Access Controls
- Incident Response Plans
- Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)
- Employee Security Awareness and Training
- Regular Penetration Testing
- Encryption

Since 2024 is almost over and 2025 will be here before you know it, will these requirements change? It is entirely possible, Information Technology (I.T.) company, Aldridge thinks the following items will be requirements for cyber insurance in the coming year (5 Requirements to Get Cyber Insurance in 2025, 2024):

- Multi-Factor Authentication
- Air-gapped backups
- End point detection & response/Managed Detection & Response (EDR/MDR)
- Vulnerability Management
- Security Awareness Training & Testing

This is just a small example of the complexities and constant evolution of the world of cyber insurance. It is up to each jurisdiction to do their homework and lay the groundwork for the opportunity to protect themselves from cyber attacks and the losses associated with them.

References

5 Requirements to Get Cyber Insurance in 2025. (2024, November 5). Retrieved from Aldridge:

<https://aldridge.com/5-requirements-to-get-cyber-insurance/#:~:text=Vulnerability%20management%20is%20the%20practice%20of%20detecting%2C,should%20embed%20in%20its%20overall%20security%20posture.>

Cybersecurity Committee (continued)

Trevino, A. (2024, June 17). *Six Cybersecurity Insurance Requirements and How to Meet Them*. Retrieved from Keeper: <https://www.keepersecurity.com/blog/2024/06/17/six-cybersecurity-insurance-requirements-and-how-to-meet-them/>

XL, A. (2024, June 1). *A Cyber Insurance Backstop? Hold On — We Need to Build Resiliency First*. Retrieved from Risk & Insurance: <https://riskandinsurance.com/sponsored-a-cyber-insurance-backstop-hold-on-we-need-to-build-resiliency-first/>

Submitted by:

Craig Schietecatte

Asst. Chief of 911 Communications

District Fire Department

Military Employment Committee

“I want to get back into dispatching....it’s what I know.” This is what I told my wife in 2016, 3.5 years into her 4 year accompanied tour at Aviano Air Base in Northern Italy. She was preparing to transition from Active Duty into the USAF Reserves at the conclusion of her tour. Neither one of us had anywhere in the USA that was home to us anymore, so we were fairly open to setting our roots wherever I could find employment and also in a reasonable proximity to a USAF Reserve Base. Away I went, looking into 911 Centers, calling ECC after ECC from my computer. Over and over again, the same message was provided. “Get in touch with us when you get back in the US, and we can start the process.” In total, I contacted somewhere between 55-60 different PSAPs spread across the United States. Out of that total, only 2 were willing to work with the fact that I was currently geographically separated. Those two agencies were Jacksonville, Arkansas, and my current agency of Paulding County, GA.

From a 2022 review ([Chapter 1: Total Force Personnel – 2022 Demographics Dashboards](#)) there were currently 3,395,354 personnel that comprise the total force concept. This is further clarified as 2,528,046 military personnel and 867,308 Department of Defense Civilians. Additionally, as of 2022, there were 2,482,499 Department of Defense Force Family Members. Combined, this total is 5,877,853 personnel. That is a significant number of people who will either be looking for a job once their service commitment is up, or, are currently looking for a job for a variety of factors (separation, military retirement, household relocation, etc).

It is important to note that members of the Armed Forces possess specific traits that are well suited and highly desired in Emergency Communications. These characteristics, as defined from the 2023 APCO Military Employment Guidebook for ECC’s are:

Military Employment Committee (continued)

- Proven leadership and leadership readiness
- Mission-focused approach to work
- Experience working in diverse teams and organizations
- Adaptable and immediate contributors
- Strong work ethics
- Strong performance under pressure
- Creative problem-solving
- Self-starter
- Integrity
- Technical skills (military experience exposes individuals to advanced technology or technical training)
- Loyalty (The military is adept at institutional socialization and cultivating loyalty. A trait civilian employer have found among their employees who are veterans. A low turnover rate can lead to a higher return on investment for businesses.)

Additionally, veterans have already received world-class training in many areas:

- ◇ Challenging and purposeful high-stress exercises
- ◇ Technical military occupational specialties
- ◇ Professional military education courses
- ◇ Critical “soft skills,” including ethics and leadership

Furthermore, all Service Members are vetted before entry into the Armed Forces, and many possess a Security Clearance higher than what is held or required by Public Safety. This raises several questions:

- Aren't these all qualities that we're looking for in potential employees in our ECC's?
- Are our centers fully staffed?
- Are we, as a Career Field, perhaps shooting ourselves in the foot by making our hiring processes either too lengthy or too rigid, inherently causing us to miss out on some outstanding men and women that want to proudly fill our ranks?

Speaking from experience, transitioning back to normal life from overseas to the Continental U.S. is extraordinarily stressful. There is so much that has to be considered; housing, employment, medical facilities, education...and that's just scratching the surface. As a Veteran myself, having served 8 years as a member of the USAF Security Forces, and having dispatched for both the USAF and the Montana Highway Patrol, to be told over and over again to wait until my family was back in the USA before I could even apply was extremely disheartening. I am forever grateful my current agency took a chance on me; allowed me to do my Criti-Call remotely and allowed me to complete my formal interview over VOIP. Once my family moved back to the USA, all I had to do

Military Employment Committee *(continued)*

was pick up my background check paperwork a few days later (once the jet lag settled) and I was working less than 2 months later. Since then, I have worked my way to Communications Supervisor, Peer Support Coordinator, a member of our Tactical Dispatch Team, and a member of GA-TERT. With consideration to my personal experience, I have to ask again, *are we doing ourselves a disservice by not taking advantage of this pool of personnel and tailoring our hiring process to be slightly more flexible when it comes to recruitment of service members?*

This is why APCO has established a Military Employment Committee. Currently comprised of 24 personnel from all across the USA, this Committee has 3 specific goals it is actively working on in order to educate both ECC's and transitioning service men and women (and their families). This three step targeted approach is comprised of:

- Development of a strategic plan to outline benefits, processes and resources available to hire military retirees, spouses and adult children.
- Educating ECC's on Military employment hiring by producing a digital flyer and webinar for ECC's.
- Education of Transition Assistance Programs (TAPS) on hiring requirements, processes and needs of local ECC's and producing educational material for distribution to TAPS programs.

By successful attainment of each of these goals, the desired objective is to facilitate better knowledge and communication between ECC's, TAPS programs and the Armed Forces Community to bolster our staffing numbers with high quality, self-driven and disciplined men and women. As the committee works towards execution of its goals, I would encourage each of you to look at your hiring processes and see how you may be able to better tailor them to successfully recruit service members. I would also encourage, if your ECC is near a Military Installation, to try to reach out to the TAPS programs to see if you can have your information included or to be able to present in-person. Our centers and employees need help, and this is one actionable way to initiate a mutually beneficial relationship to obtain it.

Submitted by: Daniel Perrin - MEC Member

Health & Wellness Committee

Moral Injury Series

APCO's Health and Wellness Committee is excited to present a series of articles exploring moral injury through the perspective of 911 dispatchers. For Part 1 of this series please refer to the December 2024 MCSC Newsletter.

Moral Injury in the Wake of Natural Disasters Part 2

In the last article, we discussed what moral injury is, and how it can be seen in dispatchers after natural disasters. It is imperative that we not only see the issue, but also offer solutions so we do not stack even more of a sense of hopelessness to those already struggling. Rather, let's take a look at several things that can be done to support those facing the challenge, and share the hope of healing and recovery just as they are helping their communities to do after the event.

What do we do to support ourselves and each other?

Psychological First Aid (PFA) for first responders.

PFA is a fancy way of saying we are providing a method for people who have experienced a trauma to feel safe, calm and connected. This is used not just for those who have gone through the disaster, but also those who experienced it because they worked it.

1. Immediate Engagement and Connection

- *Approach with Respect and Empathy:* First responders in general are often hesitant to seek help due to the "suck it up" culture of emergency services. A respectful, non-intrusive approach helps build trust. Engaging in a calm and supportive manner without forcing conversations, allowing the sharing of their feelings or concerns if they are comfortable.
- *Peer-to-Peer Connection:* Dispatchers may feel more comfortable opening up to their peers. Implementing PFA through fellow responders or peer support teams helps normalize the experience and makes the support more relatable.

2. Ensuring Safety and Stabilization

- *Assess Immediate Physical and Emotional Needs:* Dispatchers will be exhausted, dehydrated, and hungry after long hours of rescue operations. Ensuring their basic physical needs are met (providing food, water, rest, and medical care) is essential for stabilizing their emotional state.
 - ◇ If you have dispatchers who have also lost their homes in the disaster, their basic needs must be met in order to be able to require more of them mentally and emotionally.

Health & Wellness Committee *(continued)*

- *Support in High-Stress Moments:* If a dispatcher is experiencing intense emotional distress or panic, grounding techniques such as deep breathing exercises or mindfulness can be used to help create calm. Stabilizing the emotional state of each individual and the control room as a whole allows everyone to reset and recenter in order to continue to focus on the tasks ahead of them.

3. Providing Practical Support

- *Triage Emotional and Mental Health Needs:* Just as dispatchers triage physical injuries, emotional triage is needed to identify who needs immediate mental health support. Some dispatchers may need assistance to process what they've experienced, while others might require help dealing with the loss of their own homes/family or a perceived failure to save lives.
- *Addressing Moral Injury and Ethical Dilemmas:* Dispatchers can feel guilt or moral conflict if they couldn't save certain victims or had to prioritize one life over another. PFA can help them process these feelings, reassuring them that these reactions are normal and offering space to talk through their experiences without judgment.

4. Promoting Calming and Comfort

- *Normalize Stress Reactions:* Dispatchers are often expected to perform at high levels without showing vulnerability. Normalizing emotional reactions to trauma (such as stress, grief, or shock) can reduce the stigma of seeking help. Letting them know that these feelings are common after intense disaster scenarios can offer comfort.
- *Encourage Rest and Recovery:* Dispatchers often push themselves beyond their limits, believing they need to keep working, especially when they are already struggling with a sense of helplessness. Encouraging rest periods and taking short breaks to decompress can help avoid burnout, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion.

5. Reinforcing Social Connections

- *Encourage Peer Support:* In the first responder world, dispatchers often rely heavily on their teams. Connecting with colleagues for mutual support can be powerful, as shared experiences create strong bonds. Peer support programs allow them to talk openly in a safe space about the challenges they're facing.
- *Reconnecting with Family and Loved Ones:* Many dispatchers may feel disconnected from their families due to the demands of the disaster response. Helping them reconnect with family members can provide emotional support and reduce feelings of isolation.

7. Providing Information and Resources

- *Offer Coping Strategies:* Share simple coping techniques, such as relaxation exercises, deep breathing, or mindfulness practices. Providing tips on how to manage stress during a disaster can empower them to take care of their mental health.
- *Inform Them About Mental Health Services:* Let dispatchers know where they can

Health& Wellness Committee (continued)

access professional mental health services when needed, such as critical incident stress debriefing (CISD), therapy, or counseling. Sometimes knowing there is help available later can relieve immediate stress.

6. Promoting Hope and Resilience

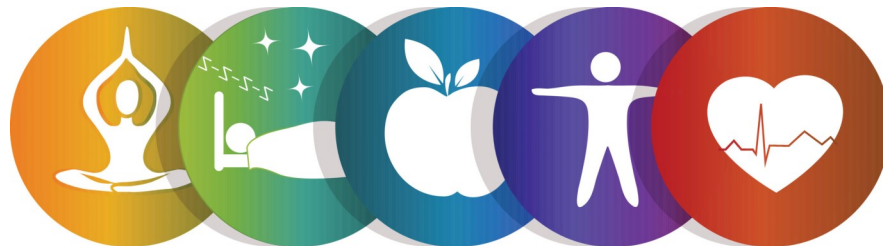
- *Highlight Strengths and Accomplishments:* Remind dispatchers of the impact of their work and how many lives they have saved or protected. Recognizing their efforts and resilience can promote a sense of accomplishment, even amid devastation.
- *Foster a Positive Outlook:* While acknowledging the challenges, encourage a focus on recovery and healing. Emphasize that their feelings will change over time, and they will have the opportunity to recover from this traumatic experience.

7. Linking to Continued Care and Follow-Up

- *Longer-Term Mental Health Support:* PFA is only the first step in helping dispatchers deal with trauma. It's important to connect them with ongoing mental health resources, such as therapy or group counseling. Regular follow-ups can ensure that responders who continue to struggle with stress, anxiety, or depression receive the care they need.

In the face of natural disasters, the role of dispatchers is vital, but it often comes with a heavy emotional toll. Moral injury can weigh on those who feel they've done all they could, yet still bear the burden of what wasn't possible. Psychological First Aid (PFA) offers a structured way to provide immediate and long-term support, helping these professionals regain a sense of calm, safety, and connection. By meeting their physical and emotional needs, offering peer support, and fostering resilience, we can help dispatchers not only process their trauma but also find hope and healing after the storm. Let's continue to recognize their immense contributions and ensure they receive the care they need to recover fully.

Submitted by: Shannon Polito ENP RPL



Health & Wellness (continued)

Trauma Tapping

What do you do when life gets bigger than you? In our profession, we live through other people's traumas eight to sixteen hours a day. Trauma is anything that overwhelms our ability to cope or feel safe, and it is what happens inside of us. When our gas pedal is always on the floor, we must create safety in our bodies. There are many tools you can include in your emotional first aid toolbox, but relief can be found at your fingertips... relief from stress, anxiety, fear, distressing thoughts, and depression. Tapping techniques can be referred to by various names, including the generic terms **Energy Tapping** and **Meridian Tapping Techniques (MTT)** and **Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)**.

These all use tapping techniques where you use your fingertips to tap between 9-14 acupressure points in a formula thought to move energy through your body. Tapping is a quick method of stress reduction; it is like acupuncture, but for your emotions, it can be done anywhere, and it does not cost a thing. Tapping works by applying gentle but firm pressure to stimulate the meridian point; use two fingers for smaller areas and four for more expansive areas.

Tap 10 times per point starting at the top of your head, moving to between your eyebrows, your cheekbones, under your eyes, under your nose, your chin, collar bone, under your arm, outside of your hand, and the sides of each finger on the side of your nailbed, repeat 3 times.

Energy cannot be destroyed; it can be changed. Tapping allows the energy flow to change, quieting the mind and relaxing the body.

Submitted by: Shannon M. White
Chief of Personnel Development
Chesterfield Emergency Communications



Teammates in Action



On August 25, 2024, the DeKalb Police Department fielded a phone call from a female whose husband of 47 years was going into cardiac arrest.

This was the call takers first CPR call of her career, and she dispatched responders within 15 seconds of receiving the call for service. Dispatcher Emily Hopkins heard her coworker phone call and immediately started the police department to this location. Two minutes after the start of the call the dispatchers had field responders on the scene to administer CPR to the victim. Thanks to the quick response of the dispatchers involved, June and

Doug's love story will continue.

Please join me in congratulating Dispatcher Emily Hopkins, who went above and beyond, by presenting her the "Teammates in Action Award."

Thank you, Dispatcher Emily Hopkins, for having great situational awareness and following your instincts to start the police department on this ambulance call. These actions ensured the best possible outcome to a difficult situation.



On August 25, 2024, the DeKalb Police Department received a 9-1-1 call from a female who was witnessing her husband of 47 years' experience a cardiac arrest. This was Telecommunicator Kayla Taft's first CPR call of her 911 career.

She dispatched EMS within 15 seconds of starting her call for service. Having heard the call in progress, her partner, Emily spawned a PD call to assist the DeKalb Fire Department and had officers enroute within one minute of the initial call. Approximately two minutes from the start of the call, DeKalb

Telecommunicators had field responders on the scene to administer trained CPR to the victim.

Thanks to the expedited dispatching, CPR instruction, and reassuring demeanor by the Telecommunicators, June and Doug will continue to have shared moments together.

Thank you, Telecommunicator Kayla Taft, for your hard work and dedication to your callers, DeKalb ECC and to the Illinois Chapter.

Historical Committee

Remembering Our Past Past President Samuel F. Gargaro

Sam spent his career of 44 years with MN DOT as the Director of Electronic Communications. He was the State Frequency Coordinator for Local Government. He witnessed the explosion in technology throughout our industry. Radios transitioned from crystal based to synthesized and later to microprocessor-based technology. Analog trunking radio systems were starting to be deployed with APCO's Suite 16 setting standards. Digital Console systems were being developed and deployed. 9-1-1 telephone systems were being developed.

Sam was very active in both the State and International APCO, serving as International President from 1990-1991. The Regional APCO Conference was held in Minneapolis during his term. Sam was a friend to many as well as providing mentorship to many.

Sam passed away on February 11, 2015, at the age of 82 years.

Submitted by: Life Member Charles Venske RPL-ENP



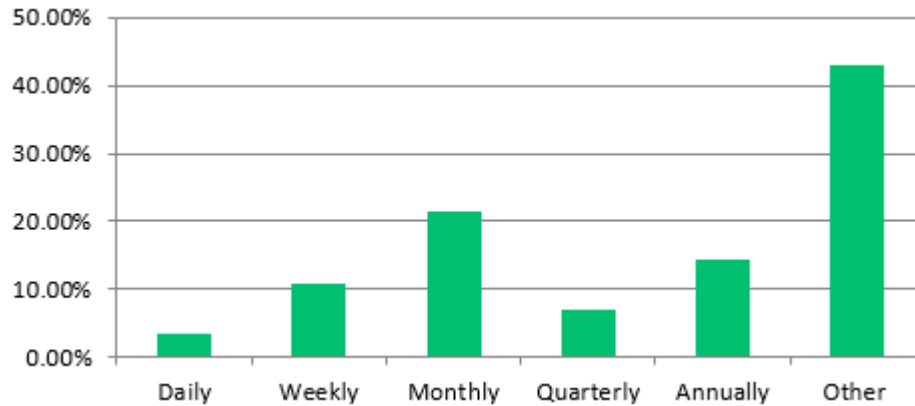
MCSC Poll

In the latest Member & Chapter Services Committee survey, we focused on Recognition. We received 28 responses.

We asked you, "How frequently does your agency formally recognize outstanding performance among dispatchers and staff?" All respondents answered, summarized as follows:

- Daily (1 response)
- Weekly (3 responses)
- Monthly (6 responses)
- Quarterly (2 responses)
- Annually (4 responses)
- Other (12 responses)
 - As necessary or upon occurrence
 - No specific recognition

MCSC Poll (continued)



In question #2, we asked, “What methods are utilized to provide positive feedback and recognition to dispatchers and staff?” 28 respondents answered, with none refraining, summarized below.

- Verbal praise (4 responses)
- Written commendation (5 responses)
- Public recognition (4 responses)
- Awards or certificates (7 responses)
- Financial incentives (0 responses)
- Other (8 responses)
 - Newsletter
 - Multiple responses provided from answers listed above

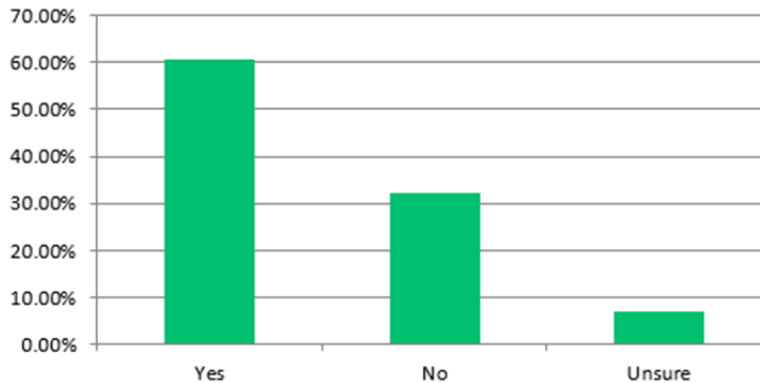
Question #3 asked, “Is recognition timely and specific, highlighting the exact contributions or achievements of the individual?” All respondents answered. Responses are summarized as follows:

- Yes (20 responses)
- No (7 responses)
- Unsure (1 response)

In question #4 we asked, “Does your agency have a formal awards program in place to recognize exceptional performance or significant contributions?” 28 respondents answered, with no one skipping the question. Answers are summarized as follows:

- Yes (17 responses)
- No (9 responses)
- Unsure (2 responses)

MCSC Poll (continued)



Question #5 asked, “How is feedback gathered from dispatchers and staff regarding their preferences for receiving recognition and awards?” All respondents answered, summarized as follows:

- Surveys (5 responses)
- One-on-one meetings (3 responses)
- Focus groups (0 responses)
- None of the above (16 responses)
- Other (4 responses)
 - Memos
 - Team meetings

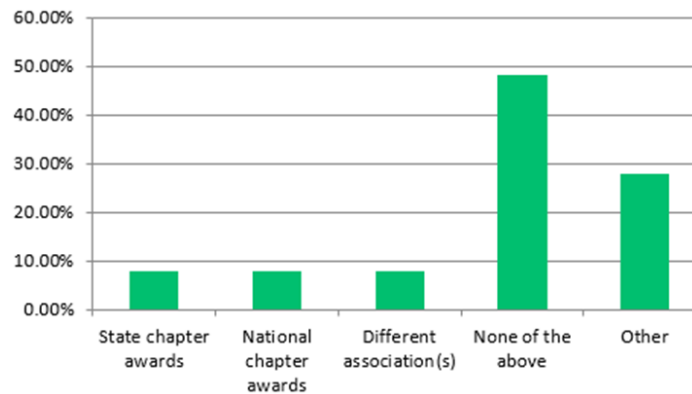
In question #6 we asked, “Are nominations submitted for external recognition?” 28 responded. Responses are summarized as follows:

- Yes (12 responses)
- No (12 responses)
- Unsure (4 responses)

Question #7 asked, “If yes, are nominations made to any of the following?” 25 respondents answered, with three abstaining. Responses are summarized as follows:

- State chapter awards (2 responses)
- National chapter awards (2 responses)
- Different association(s) (2 responses)
- None of the above (12 responses)
- Other (7 responses)
 - Locally
 - Multiple responses provided from answers listed above

MCSC Poll (continued)

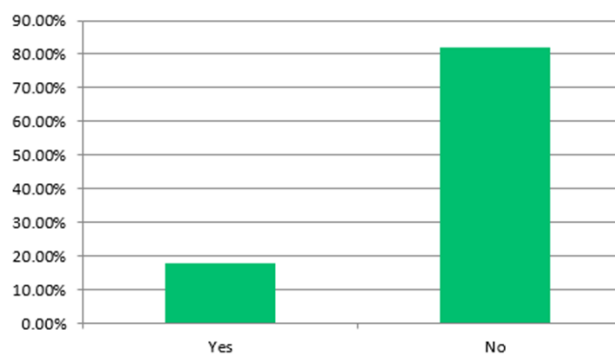


In question #8 we asked, “Are you familiar with Teammates in Action?” 28 responded. Responses are summarized as follows:

- Yes (12 responses)
- No (16 responses)
- Unsure (0 responses)

Question #9 asked, “Have you nominated anyone for Teammates in Action recognition?” All respondents answered. Responses are summarized as follows:

- Yes (5 responses)
- No (23 responses)



Thank you to those who responded to this survey. We appreciate your time and the detail you provided, as this will help the Member & Chapter Services Committee to better assist you and your Chapters.

This month’s survey will be focused on Industry Partners. Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IndustryPartnersDec24>

Upcoming Summit



Join us for the second [9-1-1 Wellness Summit](#) taking place **March 2-3** in Portland, Oregon. This year's Wellness Summit is one day longer to provide you with even more tools and insights to support your personal and professional mental, physical, and emotional health. Our 2025 program features sessions such as:

- Getting Unstuck From Trauma When Stuck at the Consoles
- FIT for the Call
- Sleep Wellness
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Build, Empower & Inspire Your Peer Support Team

Those are just examples of some of our sessions! Check out our [full program](#) to learn about all of our sessions, speakers and activities. Register now at <https://911wellness.org/registration/>. This year we are co-located with APCO Western Regional. Western Regional attendees can get \$25 off Wellness Summit registration using code WRC25.

Upcoming Conferences



MARK YOUR CALENDARS
FOR
2025 APCO WESTERN REGIONAL
PORTLAND CONVENTION CENTER
■ MARCH 3-6, 2025 ■



SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER
CONFERENCE ROOM RATES

HYATT REGENCY PORTLAND AT THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER

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