

# TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

Inclusion Through Diversity



## OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office  
125 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 274-5526

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply

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**TITLE:** Emergency Services Dispatcher

**EXAM NO:** 61333

**SALARY:** \$23.23 per hour - 2017 Hire Rate

**LOCATION:** Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response

**EXAM DATE:** 01/06/18

**ISSUE DATE:** 10/30/17

**THE FINAL DATE TO FILE APPLICATIONS:** 12/06/17

**DATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM POSTING:** 01/07/18

**RESIDENCY:** : Candidates must have been legal residents of Tompkins County or one of the six adjoining counties (Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga) for at least one month immediately preceding the date of application and maintain residency. For Examinations: The eligible list resulting from the examination will be established in accordance with the final earned numerical ratings of passing candidates regardless of residence. A municipality or district may exercise its right under section 23-4-a. of Civil Service Law to request a certification of eligible candidates who have been residents of that municipality or district for at least one month prior to appointment. After the names of residents have been exhausted, Tompkins County must then certify the names of non-residents on the list.

**THE USE OF A QUIET HAND HELD CALCULATOR IS ALLOWED FOR THIS EXAMINATION.**

### **LOCATION OF POSITIONS/VACANCIES:**

There are currently no vacancies in the title of Emergency Services Dispatcher located at the Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response. The eligible list resulting from this examination may be used to fill any appropriate full-time, part-time, and/or temporary vacancies that may occur during the life of the eligible list.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: EITHER:**

- (a) Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma; **OR**
- (b) One year of full-time paid (or equivalent part-time and/or volunteer) experience as a dispatcher, police officer, firefighter or emergency medical services provider.

### **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:**

(1) Must successfully pass a post offer of employment (in accordance with the ADA) psychological evaluation, as well as a medical evaluation that will cover, but not be limited to, such areas as: vision, hearing, speech, and physical ability to sit for long periods of time. The employee is required to maintain the physical and mental ability to perform the essential functions of the job

(either with or without reasonable accommodations) for the duration of employment.

- (2) An applicant must be eligible for all NYSPIN certifications (pass a criminal background check) at the time of application and, if hired, must maintain such eligibility for the duration of employment.
- (3) Applicants must possess Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) certification within one year of appointment, as provided by the DOER and maintain such certification for the duration of employment.
- (4) An applicant must successfully complete all mandatory in-service training as required and provided by DOER.
- (5) New hires and re-hires must pass a drug test.

#### **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

The work involves responsibility for receiving and recording 9-1-1, police, fire and emergency medical service (EMS) calls and dispatching the appropriate law enforcement agency, firefighters, paramedics, and equipment to the scene. The incumbent is required to operate computers, related peripheral equipment, radios, telephones and a variety of other emergency communications equipment in order to receive and relay police, fire, emergency medical service and other personnel to incidents and emergencies. 9-1-1/POLICE/FIRE/EMS Dispatchers must maintain a high degree of alertness, accuracy and a steady demeanor in responding to crisis situations. 9-1-1/POLICE/FIRE/EMS Dispatchers perform a variety of clerical duties related to their communication functions. The work is performed in accordance with established policy under the general supervision of the Director of Dispatch Center. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

#### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

- Receives and records 9-1-1, police, fire and emergency medical service telephone calls, quickly determining the callers needs and transferring them to an appropriate police, sheriff, medical, and/or fire dispatcher for service;
- Operates computers and related peripheral equipment in support of the 9-1-1 and radio communications systems;
- Queries callers in a calm, systematic manner to determine the nature of the situation, the location, the services needed, and any other information necessary to evaluate the situation;
- Receives information on non-emergency and emergency incidents through several types of alarm systems including radio box alarm, city box alarm, automatic dialers, and alert monitors;
- Dispatches personnel and equipment to police, fire and emergency medical scenes, arranges for mutual aide coverage when necessary by two-way radio communication system, telephone and/or a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) terminal;
- Monitors police, fire and EMS radio frequencies as well as a closed circuit television system to maintain building security;
- Uses a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) terminal to dispatch emergency agencies, enter and retrieve data on incidents, and to complete the NYS coding system;
- Coordinates radio communications between EMS providers and hospital emergency rooms;
- Uses the voice recording system as necessary to play back the daily radio and telephone calls received;
- Contacts additional resources such as; utility companies, highway departments, wreckers, etc.;
- Maintains status and location records of patrol vehicles and emergency vehicles;
- Maintains and reports each fire and intrusion alarms and those who responded to those alarms;
- Makes notifications of appropriate personnel in cases of injury or death at the scene of an emergency;
- Maintains and files a variety of other records, as needed;
- Receives calls for service from the public, provides information and refers callers to the proper individuals or agencies;
- Performs radio communications, as needed, to relay information to police, fire and EMS personnel.

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Good knowledge of the geography of the county including location in City of Ithaca, towns, villages of streets, utilities, water systems, residential and commercial districts, police department, fire department and emergency medical service operating areas, etc.;
- Good knowledge of the operation of radios, two-way radio communication system, including FCC regulations, computers and telephone equipment;
- Working knowledge of the 9-1-1 system;
- Working knowledge of different types of alarm systems;
- Working knowledge of the digital recording and playback system;
- Working knowledge of police, fire and EMS department terminology;

- Working knowledge of NYSPIN rules and regulations;
- Ability to clearly and concisely, communicate during emergency situations;
- Ability to perform Computer-Aided Dispatch data entry at an acceptable rate of speed;
- Ability to manipulate an alphanumeric keyboard in order to prepare reports clearly and accurately;
- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions;
- Ability to do EMD pre-arrival instructions;
- Ability to understand medical terminology and communicate with a hospital emergency room;
- Ability to perform calmly and efficiently in emergency situations;
- Ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality and professionalism;
- Ability to deal effectively with the public in stressful situations;
- Clerical aptitude;
- Mental alertness and good judgment in emergencies;
- Tact and courtesy;
- The employee's physical and mental condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position.

Originally created as Dispatcher 09/87. Converted to Emergency Services Dispatcher in 1999.

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**Complete Scope of the examination and Expanded subtest descriptions:**

**Coding/Decoding Information:**

These questions test for the ability to follow a set of coding rules. Some questions will require you to code information by converting certain information into letters or numbers. Other questions will require you to decode information by determining if the information that has already been converted into letters or numbers is correct. Complete directions will be provided; no previous knowledge of or training in any coding system is required.

**Following Directions (maps):**

These questions test your ability to follow physical/geographic directions using street maps or building maps. You will have to read and understand a set of directions and then use them on a simple map.

**Retaining and Comprehending Spoken Information from Calls for Emergency Services:**

These questions test for your ability to retain specific information that is heard in calls for emergency service, such as a street address, or to comprehend spoken information from emergency service calls, such as determining the location of a site in relation to landmarks. Simulated 911 calls will be played on audio CD. Immediately following each call, candidates are given audio instructions identifying which questions they are to answer within the test booklet. The questions that candidates are directed to answer for each simulated call will not be in sequential order. Candidates will need to retain and comprehend the information and instruction provided in this portion of the test to respond appropriately to the questions asked and to determine which questions to answer. The time allotted to answer these questions will be limited. At the end of each answer period, the CD will automatically play the next call. Note paper will be provided. Candidates will be permitted to take notes and to refer to them when answering the questions.

**Name and Number Checking:**

These questions test for the ability to distinguish between sets of words, letters, and/or numbers that are almost exactly alike. Material is usually presented in two or three columns, and you will have to determine how the entry in the first column compares with the entry in the second column and possibly the third. You will be instructed to mark your answers according to a designated code provided in the directions.

## Understanding and Interpreting Written Material:

These questions test how well you comprehend written material. You will be provided with brief reading selections and will be asked questions about the selections. All the information required to answer the questions will be presented in the selections; you will not be required to have any special knowledge relating to the subject areas of the selections.

The New York State Department of Civil Service has not prepared a test guide for this examination. However, candidates may find information in the publication "How to take a written test" helpful in preparing for this test. This publication is available on line at: [www.cs.ny.gov/testing/localtestguides.cfm](http://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/localtestguides.cfm)

## **LISTENING SUBTEST:**

The written test series for public safety dispatchers will include an audio-based test for all hands-on public safety dispatchers and related titles. It is called **Retaining and comprehending spoken information from calls for emergency services**. The Listening Test uses two media: booklet(s) and audio CD. After each call is played, candidates will read questions in a test booklet and answer them on a standard answer paper.

## **PERFORMANCE TEST:**

A performance test will also be held at a later date, to be announced. The written test will be a ranking test and the performance test will be a qualifying (pass/fail) test. You must pass both the written and performance tests to be considered for appointment. You will not be called to the performance test unless you have passed the written test. Since the performance test is qualifying (pass/fail), if you pass the performance test your final score for the examination will be the score that you achieve on the written test.

Candidates may be invited to the performance test in the order of the scores they achieve on the written test.

The test will be administered on a conventional personal computer (PC). You will be using a conventional PC keyboard, but you will not be using a mouse.

## **SUBJECT:**

The test consists of three parts; each preceded by a separate practice session. It will test your ability to enter the kinds of information that dispatchers and related personnel must process for fire, police, and emergency medical services. You will not need any specific information prior to the test; rather, complete on-screen instructions will tell you all that you need to know in order to take the test. In order to pass, you must enter the data at a rate of at least 6,000 keystrokes per hour (which is equal to typing approximately 20 words per minute) with an accuracy rate of at least 97.5%.

## **RETEST POLICY:**

Candidates who fail the performance test will be permitted one retest, which will be rescheduled on a mutually agreed time.

## **PERFORMANCE TEST WAIVER POLICY:**

"If you have passed a 911 keyboarding performance test administered by New York State or a local jurisdiction in New York State within one year of the date of the written test, the performance test may be waived. If you request a waiver, you must submit verifiable evidence of qualifying. Information submitted must contain the title, location and date of the performance test taken, as well as proof of passing."

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Falsification of any part of the "Application for Employment" will result in disqualification.

Accepted candidates will be notified when and where to appear for the examination. If you do not receive your notice to appear at least three days before the date of the written examination, call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources at 274-5526. If an application is disapproved, due notice will be sent. This department does not make formal acknowledgment of the receipt of an application or take responsibility for non-delivery or postal delay.

Applicants must answer every question on the application form and make sure that the application is complete in all respects. Incomplete applications will be disapproved.

**ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS OR DISABLED VETERANS** desiring to claim additional credit will request the Veterans Credits application form, at any time between the date of application for examination(s) and the date of the establishment of the resulting eligible list. You must meet the requirements set by NYS for these credits and they may be used only once. **YOU MAY NOT CLAIM ADDITIONAL CREDITS AFTER THE ELIGIBLE LIST HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. IT IS THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUEST THE VETERANS CREDIT APPLICATION FORMS AND TO SUBMIT THESE FORMS AND ANY SUPPORTING PAPERWORK BEFORE THE ELIGIBLE LIST IS ESTABLISHED.**

Tompkins County's written examinations are prepared and rated by the New York State Department of Civil Service in accordance with Section 23-2 of Civil Service Law. The provisions of the New York State Civil Service Rules and Regulations, which deal with the rating and review of the examinations apply.

The duration of the eligible lists may be fixed for a minimum of one and a maximum of four years and may be extended beyond four years if there has been a restriction against the filling of vacancies in that title.

The candidates must complete a separate "Application for Employment" for each open-competitive and/or promotional examination that the candidate is eligible to take.

All experience required meeting the acceptable training and experience is full-time experience. (Part-time experience will be credited on a prorated basis).

Appointment from an eligible list must be made from the top three candidates willing to accept the appointment.

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As part of its efforts to provide employment opportunities to the physically handicapped, Tompkins County Civil Service has adopted a rule permitting the employment of qualified physically handicapped persons without competitive examination (pursuant to Section 55 of Civil Service Law). If you meet the minimum qualifications for this position and wish to know more about this rule, please contact the Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office.

Unless otherwise notified, candidates are permitted to use quiet, hand-held, and solar or battery powered calculators. Devices with Typewriter Keyboards, Spell Checkers, Personal Digital Assistants, Address Books, Language Translators, Dictionaries or any similar devices are prohibited. You may not bring books or other reference materials.

**CROSS-FILING - APPLYING FOR CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS IN MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS WHEN EXAMINATIONS ARE SCHEDULED ON THE SAME DATE:** When applying for examinations across multiple jurisdictions - all of which are scheduled on the same day - you must submit a Tompkins County Cross-Filing Form. This form must be submitted no later than 4:30 PM on the final filing date of the examination. On this form, list each examination that you are taking and then tell us where you would like to sit. The purpose is to ensure that all of the test materials for the various examinations that you are taking will be available in one location. If you do not provide the cross-filing form to us by the final filing date, we cannot ensure that we can accommodate your desire to cross-file. If any of the examinations are State level examinations, you must sit at the State test center. You will still need to complete the Tompkins County cross-filing form. If sitting at the State site, the State will notify you of when and where to report for your examination(s) and you should bring all admittance letters to the State site. If you are not taking a State examination, bring all admittance letters to your chosen testing site. If you have any question please call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Department (607) 274-5526. The Cross File form is located at <http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/CivilSrvForms/index.html>

**FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS:** If special arrangements for testing are required, please indicate this on your application.

**ALL CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR POSITIONS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOCES GOVERNED BY TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL REQUIREMENT. PER CHAPTER 180 OF THE LAWS OF 2000, AND BY REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, TO BE EMPLOYED IN A POSITION DESIGNATED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR BOCES AS INVOLVING DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENTS, A CLEARANCE FOR EMPLOYMENT FROM THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS REQUIRED.**

In conformance with Section 85-a of the Civil Service Law, children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duties shall be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive examination for original appointment in the same municipality in which his or her parent has served. If you are qualified to participate in this examination and are a child of firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duties in this municipality, please inform this office of this matter when you submit your application for examination. A candidate claiming such credit has a minimum of two months from the application deadline to provide the necessary documentation to verify additional credit eligibility. However, no credit may be added after the eligible list has been established.

**BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION:** Applicants may be required to undergo a State and national criminal history background investigation, which will include a fingerprint check, to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.

TOMPKINS COUNTY PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, 125 EAST COURT STREET, ITHACA, NY 14850