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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Department of Emergency Management Recognizes 9-1-1 Dispatchers During National Public Safety Telecommunications Week

San Francisco, CA – The San Francisco Department of Emergency Management (DEM) today announced its recognition of National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, April 8-14, 2012. This week, officially recognized by Congress in 1991, honors the men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the public.

"This week, we take the opportunity to pay tribute to the extraordinary work of our public safety dispatchers. They serve the people of San Francisco day in and day out with dedication, compassion, and a commitment to professionalism," said DEM Executive Director Anne Kronenberg.

As part of the week's activities, the Board of Supervisors meeting on April 10 will include a special commendation for DEM's Dispatcher of the Year, Stephen Golden. Mr. Golden was selected for this honor based on his outstanding work during a 9-1-1 call from a visitor to San Francisco, who needed to send medical aid to her family residence in Maryland.

DEM serves as the 9-1-1 call center for Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The center handles approximately 1 million calls annually. Of these calls, 80% are for Police matters, 14% are for Emergency Medical Services, and 6% are for fire suppression.

Seventy percent of the 9-1-1 calls DEM receives are from cellular phones. In 2000, DEM became the first agency in California to accept wireless calls, instead of receiving transfers from the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

The center is the third busiest Public Safety Answering Point in California, behind Los Angeles and San Diego (not including CHP call centers). The average answering time for 9-1-1 calls is 3 seconds. DEM has the ability to translate calls into 173 different languages and dialects; Spanish and Cantonese are the top two most commonly translated languages.

For more information on San Francisco's 9-1-1 center, please go to www.sfdem.org.

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