

# County of Santa Clara

## Office of the County Executive

Communications Department  
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July 23, 2013

Mr. Robert Li  
SEIU Local 521  
2302 Zanker Road  
San Jose, CA 95131-1115

Dear Mr. Li,

County Communications is currently experiencing a staffing shortage that, in our estimation, constitutes an emergency situation. This staffing crisis is despite our best efforts to recruit, hire, train and retain both lateral dispatcher candidates and dispatcher candidates with no previous public safety dispatching experience. In a little more than a year we have conducted two (2) Communications Dispatcher II recruitments that resulted in the hiring of just three (3) qualified individuals. We have also conducted a Communications Dispatcher I recruitment during which we tested over 500 applicants and eventually scheduled 39 candidates for interview. From the 39 candidates we have had one academy of seven (7), six (6) from the list and one (1) candidate from a previous list who had been on military duty. We have another academy of five (5) scheduled to begin September 30, 2013. There were originally seven (7) who were offered the job but two (2) withdrew. Additionally, we are currently working with ESA HR to conduct a Communications Dispatcher I lateral recruitment with the intent of also starting any successful candidates on September 30, 2013.

Our position status report as of July 8, 2013 shows that we have 61 Communications Dispatcher I/II/IIIs out of 73 FTEs (76 head count if all our positions were filled including all six (6) split codes). However, one must take into account that of those 61 dispatchers, six (6) are Communications Dispatcher I trainees incapable of working any position independently, five (5) are currently on medical leaves of varying lengths, and three (3) are on split codes. Beginning in August there will be four (4) dispatchers on half-time codes. That effectively gives us only 48 dispatchers (46 on full time codes plus 2 FTEs combining split codes) to attempt to staff our center. Our required staff is 14 dispatchers from the hours of 7:00 a.m. until 2:00 a.m. and 9 dispatchers from the hours of 2:00 a.m. until 7:00 a.m. Of those, we must have enough dispatchers qualified to work the medical and fire communities which require three (3) and two (2) dispatchers respectively at all times.

We drafted a mandatory overtime assignment procedure in the last quarter of CY 2012. A meet and confer meeting with Labor Relations, Ramsin Nasser, SEIU 521 paid staff Isabel Olazcoaga and our Department Stewards and Management was held on December 3, 2012. We anticipated an implementation date of December 10, 2012, but that did not occur, instead we scheduled another meet and confer with our Department Union Stewards and Management on December 11, 2012. Since that time we have had at least two (2) additional Labor Management meetings where mandatory overtime has been discussed. One occurred on December 12, 2012 and Isabel Olazcoaga was present as well. It had been our intent to have a mandatory overtime assignment process in place no later than the second quarter of CY 2013 in anticipation of

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County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

summertime staffing shortages. The final draft process document was provided to Department Stewards the week of June 17, 2013. While the Department had every intention of waiting until after the next scheduled meeting on August 8, 2013 before implementating this plan, our severe staffing shortages for the month of August require the implementation of the mandatory overtime assignment process on August 1, 2013. Attached is the final procedure which was amended based on discussions that occurred during those previous meetings with the Union and Stewards.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 408-977-3206 or Laurie.Brown@911.sccgov.org.

Sincerely,



Laurie A. Brown  
Communications Assistant Director

Cc: Bert Hildebrand, County Communications Director  
Priscilla Hood, Labor Relations Representative  
Ryan Noble, SEIU Local 521 Chief Union Steward