

HELPFUL TIP



Improve Response and Operations by Monitoring Your System in Near Real-time

Emergency response in Pima County, Ariz., has improved significantly since the Northwest Fire Rescue District deployed the FirstWatch Real-Time Situational Awareness System, which allows for close monitoring of each step in 911 call processing and fire/emergency medical services response.

The Problem: A few years ago, Northwest Fire Rescue District, which serves a population of about 110,000 in Marana, Ariz., and in unincorporated areas outside of Tucson, was seeking reaccreditation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. To be accredited, fire and EMS agencies have to meet rigorous standards in multiple areas of performance.

The Fire Rescue District faced several hurdles—911 call processing times were not meeting national standards. In addition, fire district officials saw room for improvement in firefighter response, including how fast they were getting geared up and leaving the station, and how quickly they were initiating treatment on scene, especially in life and death situations such as cardiac arrest, in which the heart suddenly stops beating and death occurs within minutes without cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

The Solution: Using FirstWatch, Northwest Fire District officials began monitoring each call in near real-time to determine precisely how long it took to dispatch a fire truck, and acted quickly when calls took too long.

The Result: Dispatchers are now meeting the standard more than 50 percent of the time, and trending upward. "We needed something that was in real-time so we could react to trends and make decisions when it would make a difference," said Jim Long, Northwest Fire Rescue District Communications Coordinator. "FirstWatch helped us tremendously, and was also instrumental in helping us get reaccredited in January. It's a good watchdog that shows us at any given moment exactly what's happening in the communications center and to what extent we're making a difference in improving patient outcomes."

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