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Arlington Heights 911 center teams with national center for missing and exploited

By

Arlington Heights-based Northwest Central Dispatch System is teaming with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children to enhance its commitment to saving children who are missing or sexually exploited.

The partnership makes Northwest Central the first emergency dispatch center in Illinois to team with the National Center, according to the center.

While the move makes no significant changes in what the dispatch system does, it means staff underwent special training and insures the center will follow a protocol when it comes to reports of endangered children, said Cindy Barbera-Brelle, executive director.

"It's a raised level of sensitivity that acknowledges our commitment to making the safety of our children a priority," said Barbera-Brelle.

When it receives a call about a missing child, the center dispatches a police officer from the proper jurisdiction. If police later determine it necessary, the center would then help issue an Amber Alert, an urgent bulletin in what are considered the most serious child abduction cases.

"It's hoped that media attention and awareness of surrounding police departments about a vehicle or description would help find the child," she said.

Northwest Central answers emergency calls and provides dispatch services for police and/or fire departments in Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove Village, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Mount Prospect, Palatine, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg, and Streamwood. The center receives about 274,000 emergency calls per year.

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