Claims

1. A computer-implemented method performed on a dispatch center computer to assist a dispatcher when communicating with a caller via telephone regarding an incident requiring an emergency dispatch response, the computer- implemented method comprising:

providing, on the dispatch center computer, an emergency dispatch protocol to assist the dispatcher, the protocol presenting a plurality of pre-scripted interrogatories for the dispatcher to ask the caller to collect information regarding the incident and generate an emergency dispatch response by emergency responders based on the collected information;

receiving, on the dispatch center computer, input representative of the collected information;

determining automatically on the dispatch center computer a determinant value indicative of priority of the incident from one of a plurality of pre-established determinant values based on the collected information;

providing the determinant value from the dispatch center computer to a computer aided dispatch system;

initiating a diagnostic tool on the dispatch center computer, the diagnostic tool configured to aid the dispatcher in guiding the caller to describe a location to which the emergency dispatch response should be directed;

the diagnostic tool presenting to the dispatcher a user interface;

the diagnostic tool providing a plurality of pre-scripted location questions via the user interface for the dispatcher to relay to the caller over the telephone to guide the caller in describing the location, wherein the diagnostic tool is configured to traverse a logical tree to determine which of the plurality of pre-scripted location questions will be relayed to the caller;

the diagnostic tool receiving dispatcher-entered input indicative of caller-relayed information concerning the location of the incident, wherein the caller relays

observations over the telephone to the dispatcher, and wherein the logical tree is traversed based on the dispatcher-entered input;

the diagnostic tool storing the dispatcher-entered input for later recall;

providing location information to the computer aided dispatch system;

the computer aided dispatch system receiving location and availability information from a plurality of emergency response unit devices corresponding to a plurality of emergency response units;

the computer aided dispatch system automatically dispatching at least one of the plurality of emergency response units based on the determinant value, the location and availability information received from the plurality of emergency response unit devices, and the caller location information received from the dispatch center computer;

the diagnostic tool prompting the dispatcher to ask the caller if the caller hears a siren of an emergency response unit;

the diagnostic tool receiving confirmation that the caller hears a siren; and

the diagnostic tool displaying instructions to the caller to assist emergency responders in locating the caller, the instructions including actions for the caller to be seen or heard by the emergency responders.

2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the dispatch center computer initiates the diagnostic tool based on dispatcher-entered input indicative of one or more responses of the caller to the interrogatories presented to the dispatcher by the protocol.

3. The computer-implemented method of claim 2, wherein the dispatcher- entered input comprises an indication that the incident location is unknown.

4. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller indicates the location is in an urban area and a second path traversed if the caller indicates the location is in a wilderness area.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller indicates the location is inside and a second path traversed if the caller indicates the location is outside.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim 5, wherein the logical tree comprises a third path traversed if the caller indicates the location is underground.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller is at the location and a second path traversed for missing third parties.

8. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising the diagnostic tool providing an instruction to the dispatcher to convey to the caller to determine the location, the instruction selected from the group consisting of activating a vehicle locator, activating an emergency pendant, calling from another phone, finding a piece of mail with an address, and attracting the attention of another person.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller can answer appropriately and a second path traversed if the caller is prevented from speaking.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising the diagnostic tool providing an instruction to the dispatcher to convey to the caller if the caller is prevented from speaking, the instruction comprising an explanation of nonverbal signal types to the caller and a request to indicate a signal.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising the diagnostic tool providing an instruction to the dispatcher to evaluate and input the caller's talking status.

12. A computer system to perform a method to assist a dispatcher when communicating with a caller via telephone regarding an incident requiring an emergency dispatch response, the computer system comprising:

a processor;

an output device in electrical communication with the processor;

an input device in electrical communication with the processor;

a memory in electrical communication with the processor, the memory comprising:

an emergency dispatch protocol including a plurality of pre-scripted interrogatories for the dispatcher to ask the caller to generate an emergency dispatch response, the emergency dispatch protocol performing the method of:

receiving input representative of collected information regarding the incident,

determining automatically a determinant value indicative of priority of the incident from one of a plurality of pre-established determinant values based on the collected information, and

providing the determinant value to a computer aided dispatch system; and

a diagnostic tool to assist the dispatcher in guiding the caller to describe a location to which the emergency dispatch response should be directed, wherein the diagnostic tool performs the method of:

providing a plurality of pre-scripted location questions for the dispatcher to relay to the caller over the telephone to guide the caller in describing the location, wherein the diagnostic tool is configured to traverse a logical tree to determine which of the plurality of pre-scripted location questions will be relayed to the caller,

receiving a plurality of input components associated with the plurality of pre-scripted location questions, the input components to receive dispatcher-entered input indicative of caller-relayed information concerning the location of the caller,

providing the location of the caller to the computer aided dispatch system to enable the computer aided dispatch system to dispatch at least one of a plurality of emergency response units based on the determinant value, the location and availability of the plurality of the emergency response unit devices, and the location of the caller,

prompting the dispatcher to ask the caller if the caller hears a siren of an emergency response unit,

receiving confirmation that the caller hears a siren, and

displaying instructions to the caller to assist emergency responders in locating the caller, the instructions including actions for the caller to be seen or heard by emergency responders.

13. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller indicates the location is in an urban area and a second path traversed if the caller indicates the location is in a wilderness area.

14. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller indicates the location is inside and a second path traversed if the caller indicates the location is outside.

15. The computer system of claim 14, wherein the logical tree comprises a third path traversed if the caller indicates the location is underground.

16. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller is at the location and a second path traversed for missing third parties.

17. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the user interface further comprises an instruction to the dispatcher to convey to the caller to determine the location, the instruction selected from the group consisting of activating a vehicle locator, activating an emergency pendant, calling from another phone, finding a piece of mail with an address, and attracting the attention of another person.

18. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the logical tree comprises a first path traversed if the caller can answer appropriately and a second path traversed if the caller is prevented from speaking.

19. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the user interface further comprises an instruction to the dispatcher to convey to the caller if the caller is prevented from speaking, the instruction comprising an explanation of nonverbal signal types to the caller and a request to indicate a signal.

20. The computer system of claim 12, wherein the user interface further comprises an instruction to the dispatcher to evaluate and input the caller's talking status.

21. A non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon computer-readable instruction code that, when executed by a computing device, causes the computing device to perform a method to assist a dispatcher when communicating with a caller via telephone regarding an incident requiring an emergency dispatch response, the method comprising:

providing, on the computing device, an emergency dispatch protocol to assist the dispatcher, the protocol presenting a plurality of pre-scripted interrogatories for the dispatcher to ask the caller to collect information regarding the incident and generate an emergency dispatch response by emergency responders based on the collected information;

receiving, on the computing device, input representative of the collected information;

determining automatically on the computing device a determinant value indicative of priority of the incident from one of a plurality of pre-established determinant values based on the collected information;

providing the determinant value from the dispatch center computer to a computer aided dispatch system;

initiating a diagnostic tool on the computing device, the diagnostic tool configured to aid the dispatcher in guiding the caller to describe a location to which the emergency dispatch response should be directed;

the diagnostic tool presenting to the dispatcher a user interface comprising: indications of a plurality of pre-scripted location questions for the dispatcher to relay to the caller over the telephone to guide the caller in describing the location, and a plurality of input components associated with the plurality of pre- scripted location questions;

the diagnostic tool receiving dispatcher-entered input via the input components of the user interface, the dispatcher-entered input indicative of caller-relayed information concerning the location of the incident, wherein the caller's observations are relayed over the telephone to the dispatcher, wherein the diagnostic tool is configured to traverse a logical tree to determine which of the plurality of pre-scripted location questions will be relayed to the caller based on the dispatcher-entered input for previous questions;

providing location information to the computer aided dispatch system;

the computer aided dispatch system receiving location and availability information from a plurality of emergency response unit devices corresponding to a plurality of emergency response units;

the computer aided dispatch system automatically dispatching at least one of the plurality of emergency response units based on the determinant value, the location and availability information received from the plurality of emergency response unit devices, and the location information received from the dispatch center computer;

the diagnostic tool prompting the dispatcher to ask the caller if the caller hears a siren of an emergency response unit;

the diagnostic tool receiving confirmation that the caller hears a siren; and

the diagnostic tool displaying instructions to the caller to assist emergency responders in locating the caller, the instructions including actions for the caller to be seen or heard by the emergency responders.