

New communication center could save deputies' lives in Anne Arundel

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Eliminating the middleman could save the life of a deputy. That is the purpose behind the Anne Arundel sheriff's new communication center.

"All in all, the safety of our deputies and all those who utilize the Circuit Courthouse has been greatly enhanced," said Anne Arundel Sheriff Ronald Bateman in a news release.

Before the new center, a deputy in danger pushed an emergency

alert button on the radio to notify the county police, who then contacted the sheriff's office.

Now the center is linked into the 911 center so the sheriff's office is directly notified of the deputy in distress, saving valuable time, said Deputy Sheriff Harry Neisser, spokesman for the sheriff's office.

"Our deputies are out serving warrants day and night. If you can't do anything else but hit that big orange [emergency] button, you're in trouble and you need help," he said.

"Now [the call] goes right to our dispatch, and we immediately know

who the deputy is and where he is ... It's a matter of minutes, but it's a safety thing."

The communication center was updated for the first time in 14 years and moved from a small electrical room in the Security Bureau to the Operations Bureau in the Anne Arundel Circuit Courthouse. The state-of-the-art equipment also allows the sheriff's dispatch to monitor calls to Annapolis City police.

The new center has been operating since July but was officially opened Tuesday.

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