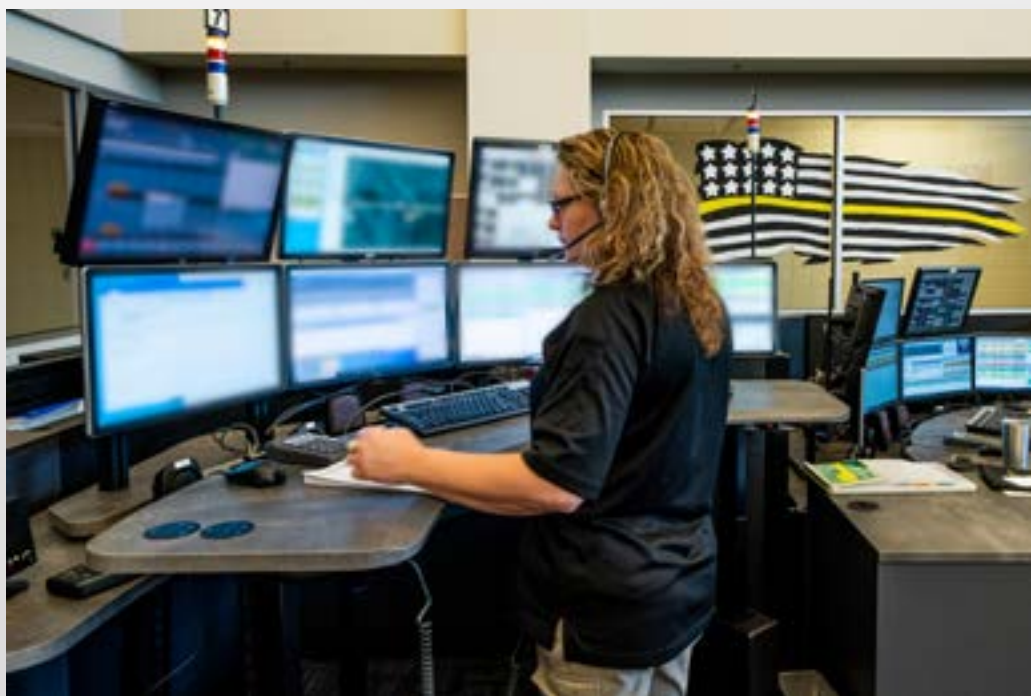


A Guide to Purchasing 911 Dispatch Consoles

**What You Really Need to Know
When Buying Dispatch Console Furniture**

2019 Update



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Introduction

If you are like most people, buying dispatch furniture for your Comm Center may be a once in a career task. We are guessing you want to get it right. Sure, there is a lot of pressure from your staff, supervisors, city, county and state to make a smart investment decision with their best interests in mind. Talk about pressure. But, you're used to pressure, right?

We have assembled this helpful guide to assist you in your initial research, prepare you with timelines, and the biggie - costs associated with buying new dispatch furniture consoles for your Comm Center. We hope you can use this guide to help take the pressure off and be prepared for this monumental task.

As with most things, this guide can't teach you everything, but we hope it will provide you with a foundation on which to ask the right questions, get the answers you're looking for, and accomplish your project on time and budget.

If we can be of any further assistance in helping you achieve your furniture purchasing goals, please reach out to us and we'd be happy to offer a shoulder to cry on. (Just kidding, we'd be happy to help!)

The Lifespan of Dispatch Console Furniture: What You Need to Know

A blog by Xybix Owner: Ken Carson



What is the average lifespan of dispatch console furniture? How long does it last?

I get these questions every now and then from potential customers. These type of questions remind me of some advice I got from a real estate agent when I was shopping for a new house. I asked him, "Should we ask why they are moving?" The answer was, "No, they aren't going to tell you the truth, anyway." He was right. The owners would never say something like, "The neighbor's dog barks all night long and keeps us awake."

When I get this question from potential customers, I'm tempted to joke and say, "one thousand years!" But this is an **important topic** because everyone wants to know whether their consoles will last, or if they will need to buy new ones in five years. Here is my honest and nuanced answer on what to expect.

I see this question as, "How far down the road will I need to replace my dispatch consoles?" This depends. More often than not, consoles are **replaced for many reasons** other than wear and tear. Consolidation seems to be a trend, and when that time comes, you get new equipment. While some states provide money for [replacement every seven](#) years or so, occasionally we get a call that a customer has the money and needs to spend it before another department gets their hands on it. This has nothing to do with whether their dispatch furniture needs to be replaced or not; if the opportunity is there for replacement, every agency will hop on it.

Typically, we see equipment replacement happen in the 7-12 year range, so about 10 years. Will you have to replace your furniture in 10 years? Not at all. Some of our customers are at 16 years of 24/7 use. We have one customer who has 20-year-old consoles in their backup center, and everything is still in working condition.

If I were a Comm Center Director, a good rule of thumb is to try to [budget for new furniture](#) every 10 years. Think of all the changes car manufacturers make in 10 years. If you have a 10-year-old car, and you test-drive a new one, it feels great. It has new features that are really nice. Dispatch console furniture does get better year after year, as well. I am always shocked when I see an old install, and I think of all the changes we have as a company to make the product better.

Asking about the [longevity of the dispatch console furniture](#) is important, and I could give you a very long answer when you simply want a number of years. The answer is you should expect more than 12 years of 24/7 use.

Like Steve Jobs said, "One more thing." Here are a couple of quick tips if you have concerns

about the console furniture lasting that long:

Take a look at the financial [health of the company](#) supplying the product. Will the company be around in 10 years? It's a good idea to always get a Bid Bond (free) or a Performance Bond (small percentage of project) if you go out to bid. If you are not going out to bid, get current or at least basic financials of the business supplying the product. Remember, all that high-tech, super heavy-duty dispatch console furniture will not be any good if the company is not around to service it.

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Your employees are your
most valuable asset.

Your Time Line Infographic to Purchasing Dispatch Furniture

A blog by Xybix Territory Manager: Kaneshia Patrick-Robinson

People often come to us when they aren't sure [how long it will take to get new dispatch furniture](#). Having a timeline and knowing approximate dates can help make the process smooth from beginning to end. Having a timeline can help eliminate the guessing game of when to start looking for furniture and/or when to start asking your county for money or possibly preparing your agency's budget for the next fiscal year.

Another great way a timeline can eliminate the stresses of getting new dispatch furniture is to help you work backwards. Let's say your project HAS to be completed by a certain date. With a timeline in place, you can let your purchasing department know that if they drag their feet on things like a Purchase Order (or PO), then it's possible the whole project could be delayed. Or maybe you are planning to [go "live"](#) in your new building on a specific date, this would mean that you'd need to have a signed PO by a minimum of 10 weeks prior to "go live" date.

Again, having this sort of expectation and time line eliminates the hassles, stress and time crunch of completing such a large project.

While the following can give you an estimated timeline, not all projects are the same. Please follow up or contact your specific territory manager for exact timelines, dates and details.

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Having a timeline can help
eliminate the guessing
game...

DISPATCH FURNITURE

How long does it take to get new dispatch furniture?

Identify the need

Realizing you have a need for new dispatch furniture is the first step in taking action. Is your cable management a disaster, are your consoles old and out of warranty, are your ergonomics in jeopardy? It's probably time for some new dispatch furniture.

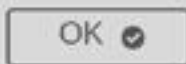
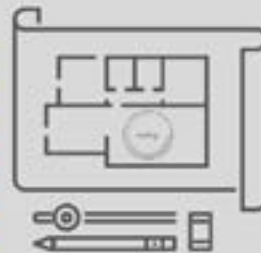


Make Contact

You've identified a need for new dispatch furniture, it's time to reach out to your local sales professional to do a meet & measure of the proposed space for design. This design will address how your specific center operates. This will also be the time to discuss your timeline, equipment needs, requirements and desired features.

2 Weeks Later

Your project gets assigned to one of Xybix's professional Interior Designers. From there, they begin to create a drawing based on your timeline, equipment needs, you specific requirements, and desired features for the consoles. They will email you within 2 weeks of the meeting and provide a blueprint and 3D renderings.



Weeks Later

Once you approve of the layout, you will then start to select your finishes, then a quote will be generated for you. After approval, you sign the final layout and quote. Then payment is received. The length of this step varies on who needs to sign-off on the contract and the process of getting payment approved & processed.

8 Weeks from PO

Once payment is received, the materials are ordered then we begin manufacturing your new dispatch furniture! After building the consoles, they are packaged and ready to be shipped! You will work closely with Xybix's Field Operations Team to schedule your install. Once the order is placed, scheduled install is approximately 8 weeks from date of purchase.



4+ months from initial contact



You're now open for business!
Call some friends and invite them to an open house!



Where Do I Start When Building a New 911 Center?

A blog by Xybix Owner: Ken Carson

A question we get a lot is where to start if I need a new a new space, a new building or a new 911 Center. I'd like to steer you to a great starting place.



The Seminar by the Center for Public Safety holds a seminar on just this topic twice a year in Orlando, FL. [The Center for Public Safety, Inc.](#) (CPS) is an organization dedicated to research, planning, and assisting first responders, including law enforcement, fire / rescue, emergency managers and dispatch services in the process of obtaining new or expanded facilities. During this seminar, they will walk you through items such as: which political strings to pull, how to get funding, what your building needs to look like, how many square feet you'll need as well as small things, like how many parking places you'll need. Basically, they will prepare you with all the information you'll need for your new space.

Seminar topics include:

- Obtaining Professional Services
- What Is a Spatial Needs Assessment?
- Involving Your Staff
- Master Planning and Conceptual Design
- Interior Design Considerations for 24/7 Facilities
- Building Political and Community Support
- Multiple Levels of Security
- Specialized Areas Design Considerations
 - Police
 - Fire
 - EOC and Communications
- Identifying and Pursuing Funding Opportunities
- Creating Sustainable Facilities
- Development Options
- The Construction Process
- Facility Survivability and Emerging Trends
- Contracts
- Interior Design Considerations

This [GREAT seminar](#) is put on by the Center for Public Safety along with ADG or the Architect Design Group, out of Winter Park, FL. Architects Design Group (ADG) is a nationally recognized, award-winning firm specializing in the design of Public Safety, Police, Fire, Emergency Operations and 911 Center, Criminal Justice, and Civic and Government Facilities. They are a family business, similar to Xybix, and they do a great job walking you through the entire process. They even give you a binder to walk away with tons of resources to point you in the right direction how to build a new Communication Center, PSAP or Consolidated building.



Dispatch Furniture Proposals: How Soon Is Too Soon?

A blog by Xybix Southern Regional
Sales Manager: Maria Teruel

When is the right time to start thinking about getting dispatch furniture proposals?

The short and simple answer to this question is, that it all depends. Every state (really every Comm center) has a unique purchasing system that usually drives the speed at which you can get new dispatch consoles. Workstations are typically replaced once every 10–15 years. If you are in charge of getting the new workstations, it might be the first and last time you buy furniture with your agency. If you're not sure where to start, don't worry; most people aren't too experienced at buying dispatch furniture.

To help you out, here's a tip. **If you can agree with ANY of these bullet points when thinking of the next 2-3 years, it's a good idea to start looking:**

- You have a radio, CAD, and/or phone upgrade
- You're getting a new building
- You're consolidating with another Center
- You're hiring for more positions than you have seats
- Your current furniture is fixed (allows for sitting only), doesn't work, or is over eight years old
- You're building/renovating a backup center

Disclaimer: Three years is typically too far in advance to start looking for proposals UNLESS you're getting a new building or doing some major renovations. If you're doing either of these things, it is a great time to bring the furniture vendor and the architect together to create a harmonious, ergonomic room that will last you for decades.

Why should you plan so far in advance? Isn't there a fixed price per station? Shouldn't the vendor be able to drop a block into a blueprint and call it a day?

It's not that easy. Dispatch furniture in the 21st century is custom made to meet the client's needs. We need to get room dimensions, equipment information, and storage requirements in order to create a drawing proposal. This data is unique to every Comm Center.

The following steps should help you on your quest for new dispatch furniture:

Step #1: How Can I Buy?

The first step is to get more familiar with HOW your center purchases furniture. It's best to know this before meeting with a sales representative. If you're still not sure, the sales representative can usually refer you to a nearby center so that you can hear first-hand advice. Remember, you'll get solid tips from those who have experience.

To further help you out, here are some questions you should ask yourself and the procurement team before you start looking:

- What is the budget for furniture?
- When is the budget due?
- Are there grants available to pay for workstations?
- Can you purchase off state contracts or another cooperative purchasing group?
- Do you have to conduct a formal RFP, or can you simply collect three quotes?
- Can you “sole-source” a vendor or “piggyback” off of a contract?

Step #2: Siri, Who Sells Dispatch Consoles?

If your purchasing team has given you the green light to start getting proposals, the best way to look for furniture is to ask for referrals! See who your neighboring agency uses, or attend your local state conferences to get an idea of who the vendors are in your area.

It will probably take a couple of weeks to schedule an on-site meeting with your furniture vendor. Why? The on-site meeting should not only be you and the vendor. **It's best practice to have your IT personnel, dispatch supervisor, and project manager present for the meeting.** It can take some time to coordinate a good date for everyone.

During the initial meeting, they'll want to get room dimensions as well as monitor and CPU information. They'll also want to hear your estimated timeline for completion. Including the time it takes to make revisions and modifications, **it can take anywhere from one month to one year to produce a drawing that pleases everyone.**

This step can take even more time if you're updating radios or CAD. Monitor sizes and quantities dictate the size of the desk you will need, which is why you see radio/CAD and furniture upgrades happening simultaneously. Your initial proposal might plan for 21" monitors, but later your CAD vendor decides you need a 32" monitor. A bigger monitor usually requires a bigger desk.

Step #3: It's All About the Money

Once your drawing proposal is complete, you'll need the quote and the blessing from procurement. Make sure everyone is on the same page with due dates, as every state follows a different fiscal year or budget pattern. Unfortunately, some furniture updates get denied at budget hearings, and you'll have to wait until next year for the next round. On the plus side, you won't be scrambling for quotes, as you should have all of your ducks in a row!

If you are approved, don't celebrate just yet! There are some crucial steps needed in order to get the project to completion.

Step #4: Put on the Finishing Touches

After the heavy work of getting the design and quote approved is over, you'll need to address the finishing touches and tie up the loose ends. The fun part is that there are catalogs of colors to choose from!

For this step, you'll need to collect:

- Finishes
- Purchase order
- Drawing sign-offs
- Cable sign-offs

This can be slow and painful or quick and easy, which is why Step #1 was so important! As you're getting these things together, you'll also probably need a pre-construction meeting with all of the vendors involved.

This step can range between two weeks and two months to complete because you'll be coordinating multiple schedules. We actually have a great article to help with that: [“What to Expect When You're Expecting... Dispatch Furniture.”](#)

Step #5: Understand Production and Installation Time

Want to know a fun fact? Production time takes 8–12 weeks to build and ship the furniture. In addition to that, installation time all depends on your scenario. Things that will affect installation time are:

- Live cut over vs. empty room
- Other vendors involved (radio, CAD, phone, floor, etc.)
- Daytime vs. nighttime/weekend installation
- Unexpected delays (there's always something)

Wrapping Up

If you read all of the steps above, we're sure you'll agree that you **should allow for a little extra time in the planning process when buying dispatch furniture**. Two years doesn't seem like such a long time now, does it?

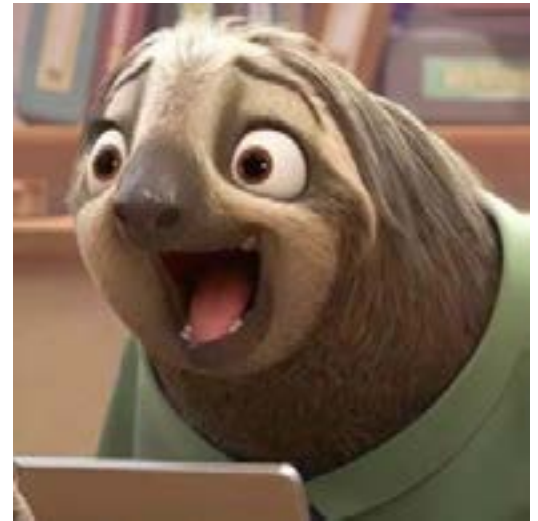
Unlike radios or phones, your dispatch workstations will be custom built, and they will sit in your room for 10–15 years. You might not care about color finishes or comfort controls like fans and heaters when you start the process, but by the time you get to Step #5, you'll be glad you took your time and didn't rush into a decision. As we mentioned, **if you're three or more years out from getting new furniture, it might be too soon to start looking**. On the other hand, getting a budgetary estimate never hurts, especially in the event you have some money leftover when it's all said and done. Good luck!

Making Dispatch Furniture Bids & RFP's Work For Your 911 Comm Center

A blog by Xybix Owner: Ken Carson

When it is time to purchase your new furniture for your 911 center, often a City or County has a purchasing department with rules to determine if such a purchase needs to go out to bid or can be bought directly. So, what exactly is a "bid"?

The word "bid" seems to be used as a generic term for a competitive purchasing process. We hear the word "bid" used in [Request for Proposal or RFP](#) or an Invitation to Bid IFB. These are two very different ways to create a competitive purchasing process.



Invitation to Bid or IFB - This is the least used of the competitive purchase process to get your end result. An IFB is mostly used for purchasing commodity items, which are all basically the same and your agency is looking for the lowest price. These are usually sealed bids and take very little time to evaluate once the packages are open. You already know exactly what you are getting. This would work well for toilet paper, but does not work well for more complex purchases like dispatch furniture.

Request for Proposal or RFP - is the most common way of purchasing dispatch furniture. This is mostly due to the difference between manufacturers and the complexity of the entire project, which would include freight and installation. RFP's do not require that the agency buys from the lowest bid. The goal with the RFP is to provide the vendors with a performance-based specification and let them tell you how they would do it best. This requires more time by the agency to review the responses they received.

It is always smart to provide a ranking chart letting the vendors know what is the most important aspects of your agency's RFP. Think of it like a grading system to equal 100.

It would typically look something like this:

- **Pricing = 30%**
- **Proof of meeting national standards = 15%**
- **Installation time frame = 10%**
- **Warranty = 10%**
- **Customer Service = 15%**
- **References = 20%**

With a RFP you can also negotiate with the vendors after the RFPs are turned in. This does not necessarily mean that you beat them up on price. But, sometimes mistakes are made in the RFP and you need to add a component or change from a one stage install to a two stage install. You can go back to the vendors and ask for an update.

If you get a specification from a vendor, beware! Most are written to confuse the purchasing department, and to eliminate competition. This creates unnecessary work for the purchasing department. This wastes time and money for everyone.

Budgeting & Costs Associated with Console Furniture - Make Sure You Don't Get Fed to The Sharks

A blog by Xybix Owner: Ken Carson



If you are in the beginning of shopping for new dispatch console furniture in your 911 center, a great first question is, "[How much do they cost?](#)" After all, you will need to plan a budget about a year in advance and get the most accurate pricing. If you don't budget enough, you may not be able to get all of the features and options you want. If you ask for too much, you may not get the project approved.

How Are Prices Factored?

Each console manufacturing company has their own philosophy on how much they charge for their product. This is based on the cost of their materials, labor wages, location, and desire to make a profit. As a good rule of thumb, all the console manufacturers have about the same cost of materials put into each station. Labor will also be similar for the US-based companies and more expensive for the Canadian-based companies. The freight of shipping can add up if you're far away from the manufacturer. For example, shipping from Seattle to New York is not cheap.

The Shark Tank

These different philosophies can be seen on ABC's the Shark Tank. The bald guy, Kevin O'Leary, only cares about the profit and nothing else. He wants to drive up margins and maximize his return. He never falls for the heart-warming story of how some young couple built their business in their garage. On the other hand, you see Lori Greiner who is more intrigued by the people and what they can do. Don't get me wrong, she understands the value each proposal has, but she is more willing to work with and train her new investments to ensure that they are successful. This success will ultimately create a profit for Lori, but its clear that she takes satisfaction in helping small business owners.

Our philosophy at Xybix is much closer to the Lori Greiner approach. **We are a family business and that means we give you honest and transparent pricing on all of our projects.** We work hard to provide you with the best consoles at the best price. We don't expect to be the lowest price, but we do want to provide you with [the best dispatch console furniture ROI.](#)

Pricing & Your Budget

Where should the pricing come in for your future budget?

- **The high end.** I saw a quote online for John Day County, Oregon for \$58,000.00 for two consoles. This is \$29,000.00 per station. In regards to the dispatch/public safety industry, this quote should be considered WAY out of the ballpark! In fact, this isn't even the same game. This would make Kevin O'Leary blush.
- **The real world.** Most of the companies in the industry should give you a price range between \$13,000 to \$18,000 per console with delivery and installation. For an accurate

quote, make sure you get all the accessories and services included. A quote with just the price of the consoles could leave you short money when the time comes to purchase. Some companies can leave out items like climate control, or swap out a monitor rack for less expensive monitor arms, so make sure you get a detailed quote with line items.

- **The low end.** This is where the consoles get downgraded into a “lite” version of the “real thing” in the category above often times, an older out of date model is sold in this category. This reminds me of being able to buy the original style of VW beetle until 2003 in Mexico. These stations may work for you and your needs, but could also come with the price of not being serviceable with warranty. At this level, consoles range from \$8,000 - \$12,000 per station. Make sure you find out what the “lite” version is, so you are 100% clear on what you will be getting.

This should [help you get started with the planning](#) and [costs associated with dispatch consoles](#). Don't end up paying too much or don't pay too little and miss out on durability and important console features.

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You will need to plan a budget about a year in advance and get the most accurate pricing.

Prepare For Your Next Dispatch Furniture Update: Make It a Success

A blog by Xybix Southern Regional Sales Manager: Maria Teruel

Purchasing dispatch furniture is not an easy task, which is probably why it only happens every 10-15 years. There are a lot of steps and parties involved, from radio vendors to flooring teams. It's not exactly like trip to IKEA!

When you're about to request your [purchase order](#), it's tempting to let your foot off the gas pedal because it feels like you've done all of the hard stuff. Many Comm Center Managers will agree, you're only just getting your engines started.



Imagine buying a new car without going over all the paperwork and reviewing your checklist beforehand. Surprise! You ended up with the yellow car when you wanted the white one! Why would buying dispatch furniture be any different? This is exactly why you should talk to your sales representative about what to expect when it comes time to actually receiving the furniture.

Here are a few tips to prepare you for your next dispatch furniture update and make it a success:

1) Is your equipment size and quantity correct?

Sometimes you need to get a quote fast from your furniture vendor, and unfortunately small details can get missed that can have a big impact on the completion of the project. Go through the drawing again and ask yourself, "Are the monitor quantity and sizes correct?" "Do we have enough or too much space for CPUs?" and "Are the monitor extension cables types right?"

The size of your workstation is dictated by the [size of the equipment](#) and how much equipment it will house. You wouldn't want to install your furniture and say, "Oh no! My monitors are too big and hang over the edge of the table!" (Not good!)

2) Are all the vendors on the same page and timeline?

Furniture is usually just one piece of the Comm Room update puzzle. Often times you'll also be doing a radio upgrade, or CAD update, or adding new flooring or all of the above! Make sure to get lead times from everyone involved in the project as well as coordinate who comes in and in what order.

3) Do you have a hole location plan?

If you're on a raised floor and plan to reconfigure your room (or change out the flooring), you're going to need to make a hole location plan. Your IT and electrical team will need to make sure they have enough slack to run the necessary cables and get the power to all of

your positions. If they don't line up exactly with your CPU cabinets...well, that's a nightmare we'd rather not think about.

4) Have you decided on a cut-over plan?

In a perfect world, no one would call 9-1-1 for the few days you'll need to update your Comm Center room. Unfortunately, this is the real world and you have to plan out how to keep 911 dispatch running while you do this makeover. Do you have an alternate site where you can move dispatch and keep the room empty? If not, have you talked about a phase plan to keep some desks running while you breakdown others? Don't forget nitty-gritty details either. Where will you stage the furniture? Do you have dumpsters on site for disposal? We weren't kidding about how much planning is involved.

5) Have you verified dimensions?

Even though your architect could be DaVinci himself, the reality is, plans can change! Last minute stuff does happen. It never hurts to verify dimensions of a new space once studs and drywall are up. If you're working with a tight space to begin with, one mismeasured foot could make or break your configuration. Before placing an order, most vendors will require sign-offs on drawings that ask you to verify room dimensions. If incorrectly measured, install problems can arise and this can incur additional costs. You know the old adage, "Measure twice and cut once"? Let's do it!

To summarize, it's not a bad idea to [sit down and work out all of these questions](#). You don't want to be ill-prepared come the day of installation. Once your furniture is installed you'll have it for quite a while. It's worth the extra effort to do it [right the first time](#)!

The Best Dispatch Console Furniture Resources of 2018 and Beyond

A blog by Xybix Marketing Director: Kathleen Utley

Preparing to buy dispatch console furniture can be an extremely daunting project. These resources can help you with current industry trends and what you need to know before you buy.

- [Dispatch Console Trends for 2018](#)
- [Dispatch Console Furniture Trends at APCO 2017](#)
- [Is Your 911 Comm Center Ready for the Future?](#)
- [A Brief Look At The Dispatch Console Needs of Then and Now](#)
- [Prepare for Your Next Dispatch Furniture Update: Make It a Success](#)
- [One of the Spookiest Decisions for a 911 Dispatch Manager- New Comm Center Furniture!](#)
- [Dispatch Furniture Proposals: How Soon is Too Soon?](#)
- [How Long Does It Take to Get New Dispatch Consoles?](#)



How Much Does a Dispatch Console Cost?

Seems like an obvious question to ask, so why is it so hard to find this information? We're making it easy to give you what you need to budget correctly and ultimately make a well-informed purchasing decision. This is our way of being transparent with you.

- [How Much Does a Dispatch Console or Dispatch Workstation Cost?](#)
- [ROI: How You and Your Dispatchers Get the Most Out of Your Consoles](#)
- [How to Justify the High Price of Dispatch Furniture](#)

References, Resources & Referrals

Having good references is half the battle when it comes to your next purchase decision. Calling a neighboring county or asking about a purchase experience is the same thing we do when we read "reviews" on Amazon. Wouldn't you want to do the same thing when it comes to purchasing dispatch consoles?

- [Call Me Maybe? References for 911 Comm Center](#)
- [5 Dispatch Furniture Questions to Ask on a Comm Center Tour](#)
- [Building a New 911 Center? Here's What Dave Cohick, Tioga County 911 Had to Say](#)
- [Find the Right Dispatch Console Furniture Vendor: Questions You Should Ask](#)

Continued on next page...

The Power of Purchasing

You and typically your purchasing department have to make some decisions when it comes to your next big purchase. Want to be prepared? Here are a few handy articles you'll find helpful:

- [The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Great RFP for Dispatch Furniture](#)
- [Dispatch Furniture: Cost, Options and Features](#)
- [Timeline Infographic to Purchasing Dispatch Furniture](#)
- [The RFP Easy Button for Dispatch Console Furniture](#)

Warranty & Longevity

Making sure you get the most out of your purchase is the same as making sure you have health insurance in case something goes wrong. Don't you want to know if you'll be taken care of? That's why paying attention to the longevity and warranty behind a product and company is important in your purchase decision.

- [The Best Long-Term ROI for your Dispatch Furniture Consoles](#)
- [The Lifespan of Dispatch Console Furniture: What You Need to Know](#)
- [ROI: How You and Your Dispatchers Get the Most Out of Your Consoles](#)
- [Warranty & Customer Service: What to Consider Before Purchasing Dispatch Furniture](#)
- [Xybix's Lifetime Warranty - 6 Year Parts - 5 Years Labor](#)