Job Outlook
Employment of dispatchers is expected to grow as fast as the average for all occupations through 2010. In addition to those resulting from job growth, openings will arise from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force.

Projected employment growth of police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers, or public safety dispatchers, stems from increased demand for emergency services. Many districts are consolidating their communications centers into a shared, areawide facility. Individuals with computer skills and experience will have a greater opportunity for employment as public safety dispatchers.

Population growth and economic expansion are expected to spur employment growth for other types of dispatchers. Employment of some dispatchers is more adversely affected by economic downturns than that of other dispatchers. When economic activity falls, demand for transportation services declines. As a result, taxicab, train, and truck dispatchers may experience layoffs or a shortened workweek, and jobseekers may have some difficulty finding entry-level jobs. Employment of tow truck dispatchers, on the other hand, is seldom affected by general economic conditions because of the emergency nature of their business.

Related Occupations
Other occupations that involve directing and controlling the movement of vehicles, freight, and personnel, as well as distributing information and messages, include air traffic controllers, communications equipment operators, customer service representatives, and reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks.

Sources of Additional Information
For further information on training and certification for police, fire, and emergency dispatchers, contact:

- National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch, 139 East South Temple, Suite 530, Salt Lake City, UT 84111. Internet: http://www.emergencydispatch.org
- International Municipal Signal Association, 165 East Union St., P.O. Box 539, Newark, NY 14513-0539. Internet: http://www.IMSASafety.org
  For information on train dispatchers, contact:
- American Train Dispatchers Association, 1370 Ontario St., Cleveland, OH 44113. Internet: http://www.ble.org/atdd/about-atdd.asp

Information on job opportunities for police, fire, and emergency dispatchers is available from personnel offices of State and local governments or police departments. Information about work opportunities for other types of dispatchers is available from local employers and State employment service offices. (See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Meter Readers, Utilities
(O*NET 43-5041.00)

Nature of the Work
Meter readers read electric, gas, water, or steam consumption meters and record the volume used. They serve both residential and commercial consumers, either walking or driving along the designated route. Their duties include inspecting the meters and their connections for any defects or damage, supplying meter repair and maintenance workers with the necessary information to fix damaged meters, and keeping track of the average usage and record reasons for any extreme fluctuations in volume.

Sources of Additional Information
For information on employment as a meter reader, and on automatic meter reading technology, can be obtained from:

  (See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks
(O*NET 43-5061.00)

Nature of the Work
Production, planning, and expediting clerks coordinate and expedite the flow of information, work, and materials within or among offices. Most of their work is done according to production, work,