FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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*** PRESS RELEASE ***

CITY LEADERS READY FOR A BUSY OCTOBER;
URGE THE PUBLIC TO CALL 9-1-1 FOR EMERGENCIES
ONLY; USE 3-1-1 FOR EVERYTHING ELSE

Fleet Week, Halloween, Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, Giants Baseball,
Castro Street Fair, Oracle OpenWorld and Italian Heritage Day to bring
more than a million people to San Francisco

San Francisco—Historically, San Francisco’s public safety dispatchers answer more
9-1-1 and police non-emergency calls in October than any other month of the year.
Why? Because there is more activity and more people in the City during San
Francisco’s summer. With events such as Fleet Week, Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, Giants
baseball, and Halloween, it is critically important the public keep 9-1-1 clear for life
threatening emergencies, use the Police non-emergency line 415-553-0123, and use
3-1-1 for information about city services, events or to report issues or request services.

“October is a fantastic time to be in San Francisco and we want our residents and
visitors to enjoy themselves,” said Mayor Edwin M. Lee. “We also want people to
remember if they have a burning question they should call 3-1-1. If there is a burning
building then call 9-1-1.”

To emphasize the importance of knowing when to call to 9-1-1 or 3-1-1, San Francisco’s
newest class of 9-1-1 dispatch trainees visited 3-1-1 call center call takers. The class
learned about call intake at 3-1-1 and was joined by Police Chief Greg Suhr, Fire Chief
Joanne Hayes White, City Administrator Naomi Kelly, Public Works Director
Mohammed Nuru, 3-1-1 Director Nancy Alfaro, and 9-1-1 Director Robert Smuts. Both
call centers serve very specific purposes but do complement each other during
everyday emergencies and not-so-everyday emergencies.
“When the public knows when to call 9-1-1 and when to call 3-1-1 it frees up our dispatchers, police officers, fire fighters, and paramedics for emergencies,” said Police Chief Greg Suhr.

“San Francisco is ready! All our City agencies have already been planning and meeting for months to make sure this month is a success,” said Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White. “We are working 24/7 to make sure our City runs smoothly.”

“Call 9-1-1 to receive help for emergencies, potential emergencies, or when you are not sure if it’s an emergency,” said 9-1-1 Director Rob Smuts, San Francisco Department of Emergency Management. “Emergencies may include danger to life, property, or the environment, crimes in progress, and fire or medical emergencies.”

San Francisco’s public safety dispatchers answered 1,165,440 emergency and non-emergency calls last year. This represents a 27% increase (919,009 calls in FY-10/11) in call volume over the last four years. Over the same time period, public safety dispatchers answered an average of 93,636 calls in October. For all other months the average was 86,409.

“We want residents, businesses, and visitors to call 3-1-1, go online to www.sf311.org or use the SF311 mobile app when they have a question about City government or wish to file a report or request a service,” said 3-1-1 Director Nancy Alfaro. “Since launching in March 2007, our customer service representatives have answered more than 16 million calls.”

311 Customer Service Representatives are trained and prepared to handle issues that may be considered of “urgent” nature such as broken sprinklers at a park, water main breaks or illegal dumping. They are also equipped to take “no known suspect” police reports.

When the 3-1-1 call center was introduced in FY 06-07, call volume at the 9-1-1 call center decreased 10.1% from more than 1 million calls per year to approximately 900,000. Call volume remained flat until FY 11-12 when the call volume began to increase to their current levels. The City is taking a collaborative multipronged approach to address the increase in overall call volume including educating the public about 3-1-1, hiring 19 new public safety dispatchers over the past two years, and working with our dispatchers to minimize medical leaves through wellness programs.

For October, San Francisco’s public safety agencies are working together to help residents and visitors enjoy the busy month safely. For more information about how to use 3-1-1 visit www.sf311.org. For tips on calling 9-1-1 visit www.sfdem.org/911.

About 311
311’s mission is to provide a prompt, courteous, and professional customer service experience 24 hours a day to San Francisco residents, visitors, and businesses seeking general information, enabling the government to be transparent, responsive, effective, and efficient. 311 can also assist callers in over 175 languages.