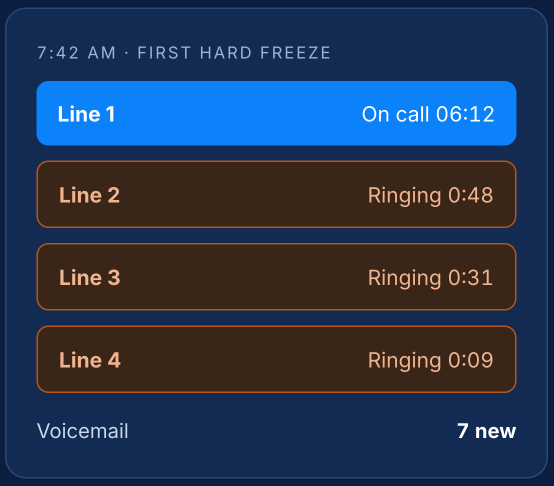
Service ProCall

FOR OWNERS OF HVAC, PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL COMPANIES

Dispatcher Overwhelmed? 5 Signs You Need Backup

Peak seasons and freeze events push your dispatcher past what one person can do. Here's how to spot it, and how to help before you lose calls or a great employee.

7-minute read · Includes a freeze-event coverage plan



THE HARDEST SEAT IN THE BUILDING

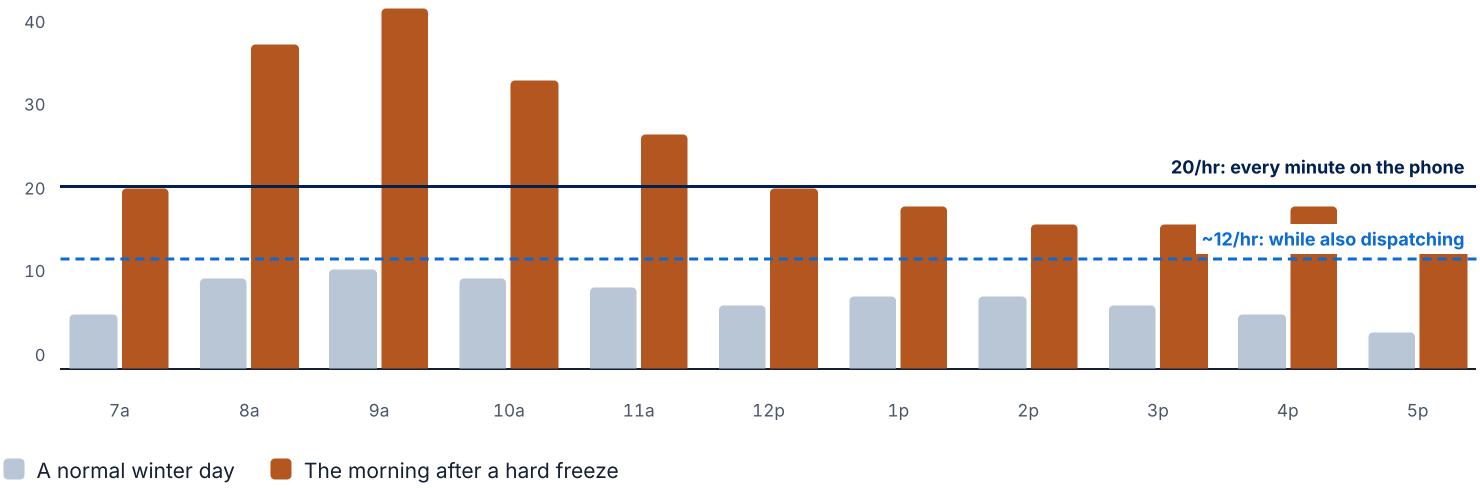
Your dispatcher is doing two full-time jobs at once

Ask any technician who keeps the company running and they'll point to the dispatcher. They answer the phones, calm down the homeowner with no heat, juggle the board when a job runs long, route trucks around traffic, and still remember which customer has the dog. On a normal day, it's a hard job done well.

Then the first heat wave hits in June, or the temperature drops into the teens overnight in January. Pipes freeze, furnaces quit, and every one of those homeowners picks up the phone at 7 am. The calls double or triple in an hour, and your dispatcher is still one person with one headset.

Nobody fails in that moment because they aren't good enough. They fail because the job, at that volume, is physically impossible for one person. The World Health Organization describes burnout as the result of chronic workplace stress that hasn't been successfully managed, marked by exhaustion, growing negativity toward the job, and slipping performance. Peak seasons stacked on freeze events are exactly that kind of stress.

FIGURE 1 · CALLS PER HOUR VS. WHAT ONE PERSON CAN ANSWER



Illustrative call pattern. Ceiling lines assume a 3-minute average call: 20 calls an hour is 60 minutes of talk time, with nothing left for the board. Every call above the line rings out, waits on hold, or goes to voicemail.

THE FIVE SIGNS

How to tell your dispatcher needs backup

Dispatchers rarely ask for help. They're proud of keeping the board running, and they don't want to look like they can't handle it. So the signs show up in the work instead. If two or more of these sound familiar, it's time.

1

Line two rings while line one is talking

Your dispatcher is mid-call with a homeowner describing a leak, and they can hear the next call ringing. They have to choose: rush the caller in front of them or let the next one go. Either choice costs you. Rushed callers feel brushed off, and the call that rings out is usually calling your competitor next.

Check: your phone system's abandoned and missed calls by hour. Spikes on Monday mornings and the first cold or hot day of the season are the giveaway.

2

The day starts with a voicemail backlog

After a freeze or a busy weekend, the first two hours of the day go to returning messages instead of running the board. Many of those callers have already booked with someone else by the time you call back, and the ones who haven't are frustrated before the conversation starts.

Check: how many voicemails were waiting at 8 am on your three busiest days last season, and how many turned into booked jobs.

3 The board starts slipping

Double bookings. A wrong address. A technician sitting in the truck waiting for their next call because the dispatcher hasn't had a free minute to send it. These aren't carelessness. They're what happens when one person is answering phones and running dispatch at the same time.

Check: ask your technicians how long they wait between jobs on a peak day. Their answer is your dispatcher's workload.

4 Lunch disappears and the late nights add up

Breaks get skipped "just this week," overtime becomes normal, and your steadiest person gets short with customers and technicians. These are the textbook early signs of burnout: exhaustion first, then frustration, then work that slips. Left alone, it usually ends one way, with a resignation in the middle of your busiest month.

Check: your dispatcher's overtime hours by month. If they track your peak seasons, so does the strain.

5 Everyone else is answering the phone

The office manager picks up between invoices. A technician takes calls from the truck. You answer them yourself from a job site. When the phone becomes everybody's job, the work everyone was hired to do falls behind, and callers get a different experience every time.

Check: count how many different people answered customer calls last week.

FIGURE 2 · TEN MINUTES AT THE DISPATCH DESK ON A FREEZE MORNING

7:40	On the phone with a homeowner: no heat, two kids, house at 58°
7:41	Line 2 starts ringing. Line 3 right behind it.
7:43	Tech radios in: first job done early, where to next?
7:44	Line 2 goes to voicemail. Line 3 hangs up.
7:46	Books the no-heat call, then reshuffles two jobs to fit it in
7:48	Four lines lit. The tech is still waiting for an address.
7:50	Voicemail count: 9. The day has barely started.

THE FIX

Backup that answers when your dispatcher can’t

Overflow call handling doesn’t replace your dispatcher. It catches the calls they physically can’t get to. Your phones ring your office first. When your team is busy, at lunch, or gone for the day, the call rolls to a trained scheduling agent who answers in your company’s name, books the job into your software, and handles emergencies the way you’ve told us to. Your dispatcher sees the booking on the board and gets back to dispatching.

FIGURE 3 · HOW AN OVERFLOW CALL FLOWS

1 · RINGS YOUR OFFICE	2 · BUSY OR NO ANSWER	3 · ANSWERED	4 · BOOKED OR ROUTED	5 · BACK TO WORK
Your team answers first	**The call rolls over**	**A trained agent picks up**	**On your board**	**Dispatcher keeps dispatching**
Nothing changes when your dispatcher is free.	After the ring count or hours you choose.	In your company’s name, on your script.	Booked in your software; emergencies go to your on-call contact.	Fewer rings, fewer voicemails, a board that holds together.

≤ 20 sec
average speed to answer

90%
of calls answered within 20 seconds

< 3%
of callers hang up before they’re answered

Service ProCall inbound service level standards, measured monthly across our agent team.

BE READY BEFORE THE FORECAST TURNS

A freeze-event plan in four steps

You usually get two or three days' warning before a hard freeze or a heat wave. That's enough time to put backup in place, so your dispatcher walks into the busiest morning of the year with help already on the line.

FIGURE 4 · FROM FORECAST TO RECOVERY

72 HOURS OUT

Watch the forecast

A freeze warning or heat advisory triggers the plan. Agree in advance who makes the call.

48 HOURS OUT

Book shift coverage

Reserve 4- or 8-hour blocks for the first mornings after the event, when calls peak.

EVENT DAY

Overflow on

Calls your team can't reach roll over and get booked. Emergencies route to your on-call technician.

AFTER

Review and thank

Look at answered calls and bookings. Then thank your dispatcher. They earned it.

COVERAGE OPTIONS

Pick the backup that fits how your phones break

OPTION	BEST FOR	PRICE	CAPACITY
Shared Inbound · Starter	Lunch-hour and occasional overflow	$295.10/mo · 250 min	~83 calls
Shared Inbound · Growth	Daily overflow in peak season	$550.85/mo · 1,000 min	~333 calls
Shared Inbound · Scale	Heavy, steady overflow	$1,377.14/mo · 2,500 min	~833 calls
Single-Block Shift · 4 hours	A freeze-event morning, a staff meeting, a sick day	$286.96 per block	~80 calls
Single-Block Shift · 8 hours	The full day after a storm or freeze	$347.37 per block	~160 calls
Dedicated Inbound Agent	A full second seat that knows your business	$4,583.33/mo · 160 hrs	~3,200 calls

Service ProCall rate card effective November 12, 2026. Shared Inbound overage is $0.74 per minute. Shift blocks need no long-term commitment. Call estimates assume a 3-minute average call. List prices, subject to change.

IF YOU'RE THE DISPATCHER READING THIS

Asking for backup isn't admitting defeat

Nobody can answer four lines at once, and no amount of effort changes that. Backup on the phones means you get to do the part of the job you're best at: running a board that keeps every technician moving and every customer taken care of. Pass this paper to your owner. The numbers in it make the case for you.

SERVICE PROCALL · OVERFLOW CALL HANDLING

Learn about our overflow call handling.

Trained agents who answer when your dispatcher can't, book into your schedule, and get your team through the next freeze with every call answered.

800-458-6211

serviceprocall.com

SOURCES

1. World Health Organization, "Burn-out an 'occupational phenomenon': International Classification of Diseases," May 2019.

2. Service ProCall, KPIs, SLAs & Performance Metrics, November 12, 2026: inbound service level standards.

3. Service ProCall Client Price Sheet, rate card effective November 12, 2026.

Call patterns and the dispatch-desk timeline are illustrative. Emergency and after-hours calls outside your agreed coverage are routed to your designated contact.

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