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Montana Dispatcher Suspended for April Fool's Joke

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MISSOULA, Mont. - A 911 dispatcher in Missoula who broadcast a false report of an explosion as an April Fool's Day prank will be suspended for one week but will not be prosecuted.

Missoula County Attorney Fred Van Valkenburg said Thursday it would be "extremely difficult" to establish criminal intent in the case.

The request for an emergency response came over the airwaves shortly after 8:30 a.m. on April 1, and the dispatcher told local fire and medical emergency services to respond to the Conoco bulk plant in Missoula for a large fire or explosion. The radio call was immediately followed by a request for cancellation, and there was little response from emergency crews.

Van Valkenburg says "the matter is better resolved through internal disciplinary proceedings rather than a criminal prosecution."

Information from: Missoulian, <http://www.missoulian.com>