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Massachusetts State 911 Department

Newsletter

Season's Greetings and Happy New Year!

May your holiday season be filled with happiness, health, good cheer and the warmth of your family and friends.

Executive Director Frank Pozniak and
the Staff of the Massachusetts State 911 Department

Text-to-9-1-1 Is Available in the Commonwealth

On December 14, 2018, Text-to-9-1-1 was deployed across the Commonwealth. This is one of the most exciting changes for accessibility to emergency services in more than 20 years. When a citizen sends a text message to 9-1-1, it will be routed to an emergency call center based on the location information provided by the carrier. For this reason, when a citizen sends a Text-to-9-1-1, they should make every effort to text the town name, address or location that they are located in.

What is Text-to-9-1-1?

Text-to-9-1-1 is the ability to send a text message to reach 9-1-1 emergency call takers from your mobile device.

How Do I Reach Text-to-9-1-1?

When using a texting app on a device, type the numbers "**911**" into the "To" or "Recipient" field.

What Information Should I Give Text-to-9-1-1?

You should make every effort to text the following:

- **what is happening (nature of the incident);**
- **location including the address/location and town name;**
- **any additional details about the location you can provide** such as landmarks, cross streets, nearby business names, apartment number, floor, room or suite numbers, or any details that may be helpful in locating you.

When Should I Use Text-to-9-1-1?

Texting should only be used during an emergency when you are unable to make a voice call to 9-1-1. **Making a voice call is the most efficient way to get access to emergency services.**

Text-to-9-1-1 will be useful for citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. Text-to-9-1-1 eliminates the need to use ancillary Teletypewriter (TTY) equipment, or third party services to access 9-1-1.

What Happens Next?

The 9-1-1 professional in the emergency call center will ask you many questions, will assist in sending first responders to the location you identify, and may provide instructions on things for you to do.

Why Didn't My Text Go Through?

Messages sent to Text-to-9-1-1 may not be received. If you attempt to send a Text-to-9-1-1 where the service is not available, wireless carriers provide an automatic "bounce-back" message. Bounce-back messages are intended to minimize the risk that you mistakenly believe that your text was sent and received by an emergency call center. As part of the bounce-back message, you will be advised to contact emergency services by another means.

Text-to-9-1-1 is currently available throughout the Commonwealth. However, across the country, Text-to-9-1-1 may only be in certain locations. **Whenever possible, you should always make a voice call to 9-1-1 during an emergency.**

Are There Any Text-to-9-1-1 Limitations I Should Know About?

Text-to-9-1-1 uses native texting technology called Short Message Service (SMS). Therefore, you must have a text or data plan on your mobile device to Text-to-9-1-1 and you should avoid sending:

- **multi-media such as pictures, videos and emoticons;**
- **a message to more than one person as a recipient;**
- **messages exceeding the 160 character limit, as the messages will be broken and may be delivered out of order.**

Remember… Do not text and drive!

Text-to-9-1-1 rules do not apply to the following: third party texting applications (apps) on mobile devices that do not support texting to and from U.S. phone numbers, apps that only support texting with other app users, or texting through social media. This can include message services over WiFi networks, where a text or data plan is not required.

Text-to-9-1-1

Text-to-9-1-1 PSAP Resources

In addition to the Refresher training and job aids on Text-to-9-1-1, additional reference materials are now available for PSAPs. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for PSAPs and a reference guide for PSAP Administrators who are looking to access transcripts of the text sessions, is available on our website. All materials have been placed in the Information for PSAPs section—Text-to-9-1-1 Online Refresher.

www.mass.gov/info-details/text-to-9-1-1-online-refresher

If you have questions about Text-to-9-1-1, please contact **Monna Wallace at monna.wallace@mass.gov.**

48th Public Safety Communications Academy

Applications are now being accepted for the PSCA being held
February 11 to March 15, 2019
at the Middleboro Training Facility.
Please contact **Cathy Rodriguez at 508-821-7217
or email at cathy.rodriguez@mass.gov.**

JOB SEARCH

PSAP Job Opportunities

If you have an vacancy in your communications center, a form is now available on our website under "Information for 9-1-1 Centers" that will allow you to advertise your PSAP job openings through our website. **Simply fill out the form on our website at www.mass.gov/e911, and submit it via email to Monna Wallace at monna.wallace@mass.gov.**

Wireless Direct Program

The progress of the Wireless Direct Program in 2018 has been highly successful. One year ago, the program had twenty-five participating PSAPs. **The State 911 Department is happy to report 194 participating PSAPs this month**, and 307 communities now covered as part of the Wireless Direct Program, shaded in **BLUE** on the map below. We applaud these PSAPs who are improving 9-1-1 for the citizens they serve!

The newest additions to the program since the November newsletter are: Douglas Police, East Longmeadow Police, Gardner Police, Hopkinton Police, Lincoln Police, Monson Police, Norfolk Police, North Reading Police, Oxford Police, Paxton Police, Pittsfield Police, and Ware Police.

Communities Participating in the Wireless Direct Program
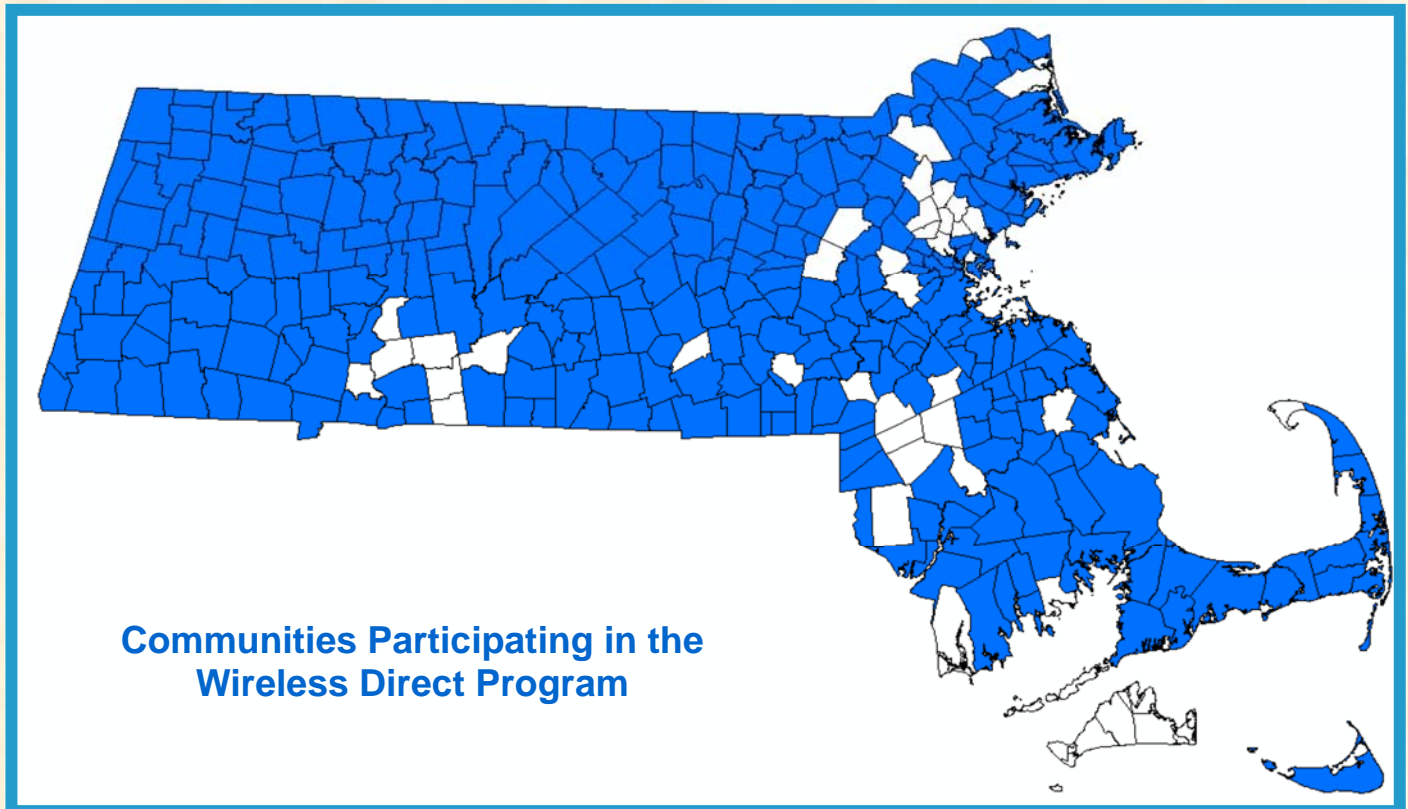
If you would like more information on the program, please contact **Octavio Sousa at 508-821-7206 or email at octavio.sousa@mass.gov.**

Carrier Networks

When talking about mobile devices, you are typically talking about connection to one of two networks—either Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) or Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM). GSM is the network standard for much of the world. In the United States, Sprint and Verizon run on the **CDMA** networks, while AT&T and T-Mobile run on the GSM networks. The differences in the technology can cause differences in presentation of wireless 9-1-1 calls and text sessions.

Wireless Callers using GSM phones that have a phone number from outside of the United States cause issues with carriers. **The phone has a number that is longer than ten digits, usually due to a country code.** The legacy carrier systems are not able to handle the extra digits in presenting data to a 9-1-1 network. **This tends to cause calls to "Default" route and when received by the PSAP, provide no ALI.**

If you are have questions, please contact **Charlie Ashworth at charles.ashworth@mass.gov.**

Wireless Direct or Transferred Calls

Have you been wondering—Did we receive that wireless call directly or was it transferred? Did you know that you can determine if a call was transferred to your PSAP or directly routed in DecisionStation?

When performing call analysis, any call that has a dispatch group of just the PSAP Name (such as Middleboro-PP) was directly routed to your PSAP. If the dispatch group contains the words "No-alt", the call was transferred to you. The "No-alt" dispatch group is directed to not alternate route to another PSAP because the call was already connected to a PSAP on the network.

Performing searches on "No-alt" dispatch groups **only** will help you determine the number of calls your center is receives from another PSAP. *Please note that E7 digit (legacy two-way calls) will also appear as "No-alt", and will be identified as E7 digit.*

If you are have questions, please contact **Charlie Ashworth at charles.ashworth@mass.gov.**

DECEMBER

FROM OUR DESKS TO YOURS...

THE STATE 911 DEPARTMENT FINANCE STAFF WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES A VERY SAFE, HAPPY, AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON!!

The **DEADLINE** for filing FY 2019 Support and Incentive Grant and Training and EMD/Regulatory Compliance Grants is **Friday, February 1, 2019**. PSAPs are reminded that costs incurred prior to contract start date are not eligible.

Please note while your allocations may not decrease based upon the date an application is submitted, the number of months/days a PSAP has to spend its allocation does decrease with each day that passes. PSAPs may only use funds for expenses incurred after the contract start date. For example, if a PSAP files its application on December 31, 2018 and secures a contract start date of January 15, 2019, then only expenses incurred between January 15, 2019 and June 30, 2019 are eligible for reimbursement under the grant program.

As the seasons change, so to do personnel and responsibilities. If you have recently been assigned the responsibility of managing the State 911 Department grants for your PSAP or if you would like a "refresher" on the grant programs, please contact Karen Robitaille at Karen.Robitaille@state.ma.us or 508-821-7221 to schedule a training session to review the application and reimbursement processes.

Just a REMINDER: In an effort to eliminate confusion, effective January 1, 2019, the State 911 Department will no longer retain copies of reimbursement requests that are returned to PSAPs. All documentation will be returned to the PSAP; only the return letter will be retained for the grant file.

The **FY 2020 REGIONAL and REGIONAL SECONDARY PSAP and RECC DEVELOPMENT GRANT** guidelines and application have been released. All applications are due on or before **5:00 PM** on **Friday, March 1, 2019** and are available on the website at www.mass.gov/e911.

If you have questions, please contact **Karen Robitaille**
at 508-821-7221 or email at karen.robitaille@mass.gov.

The Clarity Alto Big Button Phone is TIA-4953 certified for mild, moderate and severe hearing loss. It is ideal for Hard of Hearing/Low Vision/Cognitive.

This telephone amplifies incoming sounds up to 53 decibels and outgoing speech up to 15 decibels.

FEATURED PRODUCT

- Clarity Audio Center featuring ergonomic volume and tone control;

- Built-in speakerphone;

- Soft touch backlight keypad and ten (10) one-touch speed dial memory buttons;

- Extra loud ringer volume (100 DBA);

- Clarity Logic™ remote diagnostic service—program the phone at the touch of a button;

- Clarity Voice Assist for talking keypad and talking Caller ID;

- Battery backup lets you make calls when the power goes out;

- Oversized bright visual ringer;

- TIA-1083 compliant for hearing aid compatibility;

For more information and to obtain a complete list of specialized telephones available in Mass EDP, please call an EDP Representative at **1-800-300-5658.**

massedp join in

Flashback: This Year in 9-1-1
2008

On July 31, 2008, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Chapter 223 of the Acts of 2008 (Chapter 223). The Acts of 2008 brought about many changes and paved the way for the future of public safety emergency communications in the Commonwealth. Some of the changes are highlighted below:

- Creation of the State 911 Commission and State 911 Department, changing the name and organizational structure of the Statewide Emergency Telecommunications Board, with continued coordination and effecting the implementation of enhanced 9-1-1 service for the Commonwealth;

- Creation of the Grants Program to reimburse PSAPs for various expenses related to support, incentives, regionalization and training;

- Standards requiring PSAPs to have certified emergency medical dispatch personnel or to provide emergency medical dispatch through a certified emergency medical dispatch resource.

50 YEARS 9-1-1