

Massachusetts Next Generation 9-1-1

ABANDONED WIRELESS 9-1-1 CALL HANDLING PROTOCOL

For Public Safety Answering Points
within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
2019



The Massachusetts State 911 Department

ABANDONED WIRELESS CALL HANDLING PROTOCOL

Issue Date August 2019

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines which are to serve as a protocol for efficient and effective call processing of abandoned 9-1-1 calls for those Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) that receive direct wireless 9-1-1 calls.

DEFINITIONS

Abandoned Call – A call placed to 9-1-1 in which the caller disconnects before the call can be answered by the 9-1-1 telecommunicator.

Alternate Routed – A call is “alternate routed” and an abandoned call is created if; the call rings at the intended PSAP for configured timer and the intended PSAP does not answer the 911 call is rerouted to the pre designated Alternate PSAP.

Callback – The process performed by a certified 9-1-1 telecommunicator to attempt to reconnect with a wireless telephone when a 9-1-1 call has been disconnected for any reason.

Call Trace Procedure – The process by which a certified 9-1-1 telecommunicator may obtain subscriber information when an exigent public safety need for subscriber information from the cellular provider of record exists.

Dispatchable Location – The verified or corroborated street address of the calling party plus additional information such as floor, suite, apartment or similar information that may be needed to adequately identify the location of the calling party.

Exigent Circumstance – The totality of a situation that would cause a reasonable person to believe that relevant immediate action is necessary to prevent physical harm to life or prevent some other consequence that would otherwise jeopardize public safety.

Non-service initialized Device (NSI Device) – A mobile device for which there is no valid service contract with any cellular provider. As such, NSI devices have no associated subscriber name and address, do not provide a call-back number, cannot be called back, and may not provide location. Phones that are not registered for service still have the ability to contact 9-1-1. These devices usually have a “911” area code for the call back number.

Open Line – A 9-1-1 call received by a PSAP that does not result in any productive two-way communication between the caller and certified 9-1-1 telecommunicator. See definition of “Silent Call”.

Probable Location Circle – The circle displayed around geographical location (i.e. latitude and longitude) on the mapping application, which has been provided for a wireless call. The size of the circle surrounding the coordinates is in direct relation to the distance of uncertainty provided at the time a wireless call is answered or a Retransmit is performed. For example: the larger the uncertainty, the larger the circle; the smaller the uncertainty, the smaller the circle.

Pocket Dial - A call which occurs when a device accidentally calls 9-1-1, and a person is unknowingly connected to 9-1-1. In some cases, smartphones are programmed to call 9-1-1 automatically after a specific button or sequence of buttons are pressed. See definition of “unintentional call”.

Retransmit – The process of requesting an Automatic Location Identification (ALI) refresh or rebid through the 9-1-1 system in an attempt to obtain more accurate location information of a wireless caller.

Silent Call - A 9-1-1 call received by a PSAP wherein there is an open line call, where no one is speaking or responding to the certified 9-1-1 telecommunicator’s voice, and the call is not disconnected. There are a variety of reasons for silent calls, some including physical disabilities, TTY users, unsafe circumstances, medical emergencies or conditions, language barriers, or Unintentional call. If, after administering the standard 9-1-1 greeting:

- a. *The caller remains silent, or is unable to participate in productive two-way conversation with the telecommunicator, thereby presenting as an Open Line, or*
- b. *The caller makes sounds, vocalizations or noises that do not arise to two-way conversation with the telecommunicator, or*
- c. *Background noises—such as a threatening or angry conversation, difficulty breathing, whimpering, or any other sounds that indicate the caller needs emergency assistance—are present,*

Telecommunicator – Any PSAP personnel certified and in compliance, according to the State 911 Department standards, for answering emergency 9-1-1 calls for service.

Unintentional Call - A 9-1-1 call received by a PSAP that is determined to be accidental or inadvertent in nature after it 1) shows no immediate need for emergency services, and 2) does not indicate an emergency situation after being processed using the Silent Call procedure and thoroughly investigated by a telecommunicator, or 3) is confirmed as a misdial by the caller. Many times an unintentional 911 call has no dispatchable location nor true emergency, it is not mandatory and in the vast majority of unintentional calls it is not prudent to dispatch resources for this type of call.

PROTOCOL

Any incoming call delivered to a PSAP on the 9-1-1 equipment, provided by the State 9-1-1 Department shall be processed as an emergency call for service. We recommend that the Abandoned Call procedure be part of the telecommunicator evaluation process.

A call is “abandoned” when;

1. The caller hangs up prior to being answered; or
2. The call is alternate routed by the system.

When an abandoned 9-1-1 call is received, the telecommunicator shall:

- Redial the caller.
- Leave a voicemail or accept the report of the emergency incident, and take all appropriate actions regarding the reported incident.

PROCEDURE

1. **Redial the caller:** The telecommunicator will redial the caller, if possible
 - a. If the outbound call is unanswered;
 - i. leave a voicemail saying

*“This is 9-1-1. We received a 9-1-1 call from this number.
If you have an emergency, please call 9-1-1,
wait until the call is answered,
and state your location and emergency.”*
 - ii. If no voicemail is available.... Wait approximately 2 minutes and try again.
 - b. If the outbound call is answered;
 - i. And the caller is able to speak; continue following the “Wireless 9-1-1 Call Handling Protocol”
2. **Determine if an exigent circumstance exists.**
 - a. If the telecommunicator believes this to be an exigent circumstance they are to activate the call trace procedure as follows:
 - i. Call the appropriate carrier to request the subscriber billing information and, if necessary, an active “ping” of the device.
 - b. If the telecommunicator does NOT believe this is an exigent circumstance and the PSAP has active 9-1-1 calls pending, which have not been answered, telecommunicators may temporarily proceed to answer calls, until such time that pending calls have been answered and processed.