



Text-to-911: What You Need to Know

Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message to reach 911 emergency call takers from your mobile phone or device. However, because voice calls to 911 provide more information to 911 call centers, you should always make a voice call to 911 during an emergency whenever possible.

Text-to-911 is only currently available in certain locations. The FCC encourages emergency call centers to begin accepting texts, but it is up to each call center to decide the particular method in which to implement and deploy text-to-911 technology.

FCC rules require all wireless carriers and other providers of text messaging applications in the United States to deliver emergency texts to call centers that request them. If a call center requests text-to-911 service, text messaging providers must deliver the service in that area within six months.

To check to see if the 911 call center in your area supports text-to-911, download our list of areas supporting available service at www.fcc.gov/file/12285/download (updated monthly). But even in areas where call centers accept text-to-911, existing voice-based 911 service is still the most reliable and preferred method of contact.

How to contact 911

If you use a wireless phone or other type of mobile device, make sure to do the following in an emergency:

- Always contact 911 by making a voice call, if you can.
- If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled, and text-to-911 is not available, use a TTY or a telecommunications relay service, if possible.

Bounce-back messages

If you attempt to send a text to 911 where the service is not yet available, FCC rules require all wireless carriers and other text messaging providers to send an automatic "bounce-back" message that will advise you to contact emergency services by another means, such as making a voice call or using telecommunications relay service. Bounce-back messages are intended to minimize your risk of mistakenly believing that a text to 911 has been transmitted to an emergency call center when it has not.

Which service providers are not required to support text-to-911?

- The FCC's text-to-911 rules do not apply to text messaging applications that do not support texting to and from U.S. phone numbers.
- Text messaging apps that only support texting with other app users or texting via social media are not required to support text-to-911.



For more information

To learn more about FCC programs to promote access to telecommunications services for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office website at www.fcc.gov/disability. You have multiple options for contacting the FCC:

- Via the Consumer Help Center: consumercomplaints.fcc.gov
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); Videophone for ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

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