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Text to 9-1-1 Comes To Los Angeles County

"Call if you can -- text if you can't"

LONG BEACH, Calif. - Mobile users in Los Angeles County now have the ability to send text messages to 9-1-1, giving hearing and speech impaired residents, or those in situations where it is too dangerous to dial 9-1-1, a potentially lifesaving option.

"Call if you can -- text if you can't" is the slogan developed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the new technology makes its debut in the most populous county in the United States.



Officials with the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) made the announcement on the campus of California State University, Long Beach, the first Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in the state of California to accept 9-1-1 texts.

"This technology can save lives and meets the needs of a growing population that relies on text messaging as a key form of communication," said Mark Ghilarducci, Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Most Los Angeles County dispatch centers are now equipped to receive and respond to mobile phone SMS Text to 9-1-1 messages. This service is available for use by the deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired, and in situations where it is too dangerous to make a voice call to 9-1-1.

Below are the FCC guidelines for how to contact 9-1-1. If you use a wireless phone or other type of mobile device, make sure to do the following in an emergency:

- If you can, always contact 9-1-1 by making a voice call, **"Call if you can - text if you can't."**
- If you are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech disabled, and Text to 9-1-1 is not available, use a TTY or telecommunications relay service, if available.
- If you text 9-1-1 and text is not available in your area, you will receive a bounce back message advising "text is not available please make a voice call to 9-1-1."
- Location accuracy varies by carrier and should not be relied upon. Be prepared to give your location.
- Text to 9-1-1 services will not be available if the wireless carrier cannot ascertain a location of the device sending the message.
- Text to 9-1-1 is not available if you are roaming.
- A text or data plan is required to place a text to 9-1-1.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 9-1-1. They cannot be received at the 9-1-1 center at this time.
- Text messages should be sent in plain language and not contain popular abbreviations (SMH, LOL, ICYMI) or emojis, which will not be recognized.
- Text to 9-1-1 cannot be sent to more than one person. Do not send your emergency text to anyone other than 9-1-1.
- Texts must be in English only. There currently is no language interpretation for text available. This is still in development.

More information on Text to 9-1-1 can be found by visiting www.caloes.ca.gov.