

News Release

9-1-1: Call if You Can, Text if You Can't

Voice Calls to 9-1-1 Are the Most Reliable and Fastest Way to Contact 9-1-1

The Prince William County Office of Public Safety Communications announced July 24, 2017 that it has begun accepting text-to-9-1-1 service for Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon Wireless customers can now send a text (up to 140 characters) to 9-1-1 in an emergency. Text to 9-1-1 should only be used in an emergency situation when placing a call is not possible: For instance, if the caller is deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired, or when speaking out loud would put the caller in danger.

If there is an emergency and you are unable to make a call, remember these steps:

Do not text and drive

- In the first text message send the location of the emergency and type of emergency.
- Text in simple words - Send a short text message without abbreviations or slang.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.

Text-to-9-1-1 service is ONLY for emergencies.

- Non-emergencies should be reported by phone call or TTY/TDD services to 703-792-6500.
- It is a crime to text or call 9-1-1 with a false report.

The Text-to-9-1-1 service will have many challenges.

- A text or data plan is required to place a text-to-9-1-1
- As with all text messages, messages to 9-1-1 may take longer to receive, may get out of order, or may not be received at all.
- If you do not receive a text response from 9-1-1, try to contact 9-1-1 by phone or TDD/TTY.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 9-1-1.
- Text-to-9-1-1 cannot include more than one recipient. Do not send your emergency text to anyone other than 9-1-1.

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Text-to-9-1-1 service is available in Northern Virginia and Washington, DC but is not available everywhere in Virginia and the rest of the United States.

For further information contact Alfred Miller, Public Safety Communications Director at 703.792.7146 or amiller@pwcgov.org