



The Governing Voice for
700,000 Wayne County Residents



Questions, Answers and Tips About Text-to-911 Call If You Can, Text If You Can't

What is text-to-911?

Text-to-911 refers to the ability to send text messages to local 911 call centers during an emergency. Despite growing reliance on text messaging by millions of consumers, almost all 9-1-1 call centers today cannot receive text messages; they can only receive *voice* calls, about two-thirds of which are from wireless phones.

At this time, text-to-911 can only receive SMS, or Short Message Service, texts. However, as we continue to move forward with new technology, in a Next Generation 911 environment, consumers will eventually be able to make voice, text, or video "calls" from any communications device via Internet Protocol-based networks.

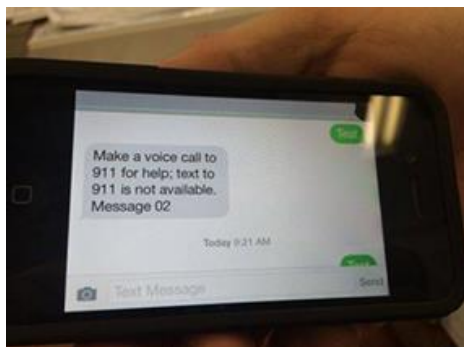
What are the benefits of text-to-911?

There will be many significant benefits to consumers, especially in cases when the caller cannot communicate verbally. For example, text-to-911 will be very useful to the approximately 34 million Americans who are hard of hearing, deaf, or speech-impaired. Text-to-9-1-1 could also help in situations when a crime is in process; the caller is facing domestic abuse; the caller is injured and cannot speak; or other scenarios.

What is important for Wayne County residents to understand about text-to-911?

Anyone who is within the borders of the 18 CWW communities can use the service, as long as they have a texting plan with one of the four major carriers: AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile or Verizon. The service is activated by sending a SMS text on a mobile phone to the number "911". That text message will be routed to the nearest CWW 911 dispatch center for action.

At the current time, the rest of Wayne County does not have text-to-911 service, although some neighboring counties such as Oakland and Macomb have fully implemented text-to-911. If the texter is in an area that does not support text-to-911, they will receive a "bounce-back" message informing them 911 is not available via text:



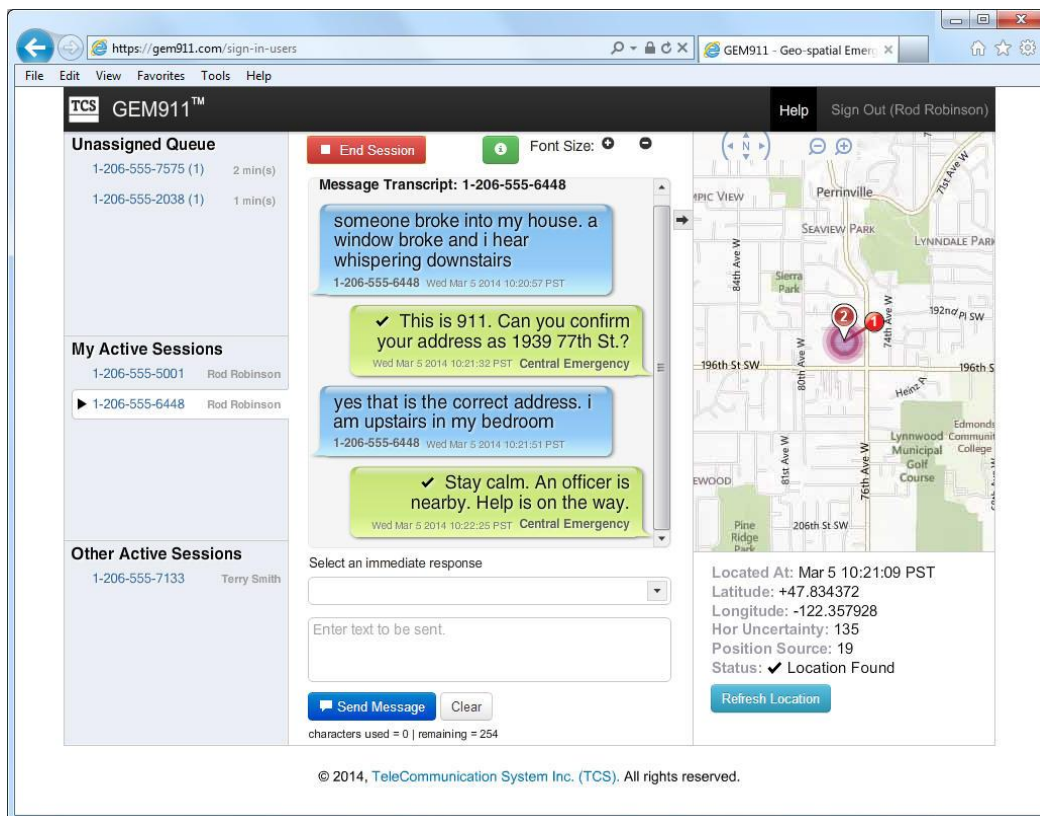
What is the cost to the communities for this service?

Because of cooperation with service providers such as Verizon Wireless and technology already in place, text-to-911 will not cost any more to operate than the existing service. There is no cost for Western Wayne County to incur at this time.

How does it work?

Wireless carriers will provide text-to-911 services in the format requested by local 911 call centers. Western Wayne County is using the GEM911 Web based portal. The carriers have provisioned the service based on the call centers' requests.

A text-to-911 conversation for the 911 dispatcher will look similar to this:



The screenshot displays the GEM911 web portal interface. The browser address bar shows 'https://gem911.com/sign-in-users'. The page title is 'GEM911™'. The interface includes a navigation menu with 'File', 'Edit', 'View', 'Favorites', 'Tools', and 'Help'. A user profile section shows 'Sign Out (Rod Robinson)'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Unassigned Queue:** Lists two incoming messages from 1-206-555-7575 (1) and 1-206-555-2038 (1).
- My Active Sessions:** Shows two active sessions for user 'Rod Robinson' with phone numbers 1-206-555-5001 and 1-206-555-6448.
- Other Active Sessions:** Shows one active session for user 'Terry Smith' with phone number 1-206-555-7133.
- Message Transcript:** Displays a conversation for phone number 1-206-555-6448. The messages are:
 - Message 1: "someone broke into my house. a window broke and i hear whispering downstairs" (1-206-555-6448, Wed Mar 5 2014 10:20:57 PST)
 - Message 2: "This is 911. Can you confirm your address as 1939 77th St.?" (1-206-555-6448, Wed Mar 5 2014 10:21:32 PST, Central Emergency)
 - Message 3: "yes that is the correct address. i am upstairs in my bedroom" (1-206-555-6448, Wed Mar 5 2014 10:21:51 PST)
 - Message 4: "Stay calm. An officer is nearby. Help is on the way." (1-206-555-6448, Wed Mar 5 2014 10:22:25 PST, Central Emergency)
- Response Form:** Includes a dropdown for "Select an immediate response", a text input field for "Enter text to be sent.", and "Send Message" and "Clear" buttons. A character count shows "characters used = 0 | remaining = 254".
- Map:** A map showing the location of the emergency. The location is marked with a red pin and labeled "2". The map includes street names like 84th Ave W, 80th Ave W, 76th Ave W, 74th Ave W, 196th St SW, and 192nd Pl SW. Landmarks like Sierra Park and Lynnwood Municipal College are also visible.
- Location Data:** Located At: Mar 5 10:21:09 PST, Latitude: +47.834372, Longitude: -122.357928, Hor Uncertainty: 135, Position Source: 19, Status: ✓ Location Found. A "Refresh Location" button is present.

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What are the major challenges to making text-to-911 work?

The widespread availability of text-to-911 will depend not only on telecommunications carriers but also on the ability of more than 6,000 911 centers to implement new systems and training. A key challenge facing 911 call centers is selecting the text-to-911 platform that works best in their individual centers, out of more than a dozen solutions available today. Emergency call centers and authorities need to conduct extensive research and testing – including input from front-line call takers -- to select the option that best fits their needs.

Why is text-to-911 needed now?

Simply put, text messaging is one of the primary ways people communicate today, especially younger people and members of the hearing and speech disabilities community. According to Forrester Research, an estimated 6 billion SMS messages are sent every day in the United States, or more than 2.2 trillion per year. The 911 community is constantly striving to meet the evolving needs of the public, and right now that means implementing text-to-911 solutions.

When will text-to-911 be broadly available?

Under a historic agreement reached in December 2012 between NENA , the "Big 4" wireless carriers (Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, and T-Mobile), and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), text-to-911 capabilities were in place on those four carriers' networks by May 2014. However, this does not mean that text-to-911 service was available to *all* consumers by 2014; the *actual* availability hinges on the deployment of new systems and training at more than 6,000 911 centers across America.

Even when text-to-911 becomes widely available, the best way to contact 911 will continue to be via voice communications whenever possible.

How to text in an emergency:

- Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field;
- The first text message to 911 should be brief and contain the location of the emergency and type of help needed;
- Push the "Send" button.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 call taker.
- Text in simple words – do not use abbreviations.
- Keep text messages brief and concise.

Below are a few things to know if you need to text -to-911:

- Text location information is not equal to current location technology. Be prepared to give your location.
- As with all text messages, 911 messages *can* take longer to receive, can get out of order or may not be received.
- Text-to-911 is not available if you are roaming.
- A text or data plan is required to place a text-to-911.
- If texting to 911 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you will receive a message indicating that texting 911 is not available and to contact 911 by other means.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 9-1-1 at this time.
- Text-to-911 cannot include more than one person. Do not send your emergency text to anyone other than 911.

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