



Text-to-911 Service is Now Available in Maryland

Annapolis, Md. (August 20, 2020)—Effective today, 911 call centers across Maryland will begin accepting text messages via text-to-911 service.

Customers of the three major wireless carriers (AT&T, former Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon) who are enrolled in their carriers' text messaging and/or data plan can send text messages to 911 in an emergency when they are unable to place a phone call. This includes those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech impaired, those who may find themselves in a situation where placing a voice call could put them in danger, or those who are experiencing a medical emergency and are unable to speak.

“We are thrilled to officially launch text-to-911 service here in Maryland,” said Wayne Darrell, Director of Kent County’s Office of Emergency Services. “While a phone call is still the preferred way to contact 911, the ability to send a text message to 911 gives residents and visitors, particularly those who may have difficulty placing a voice call, better access to emergency services.”

If you are in need of emergency services and unable to place a phone call, you can enter 911 in the “To” line of a new text message and begin your message with the location of the emergency and the type of help needed—police, fire, or emergency medical services. Once the message has been received at the 911 call center, a 911 specialist will respond. You should be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions.


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Additional tips for using text-to-911 service:

- As with all text messages, messages to 911 may take longer to receive, may be received out of order, and/or may not be received at all
- If text-to-911 service is not available, you will receive a bounce back message from your carrier telling you to place a phone or relay call instead
- Photos and videos cannot be received by 911 call centers
- English is the preferred language for text messaging, though some limited translation services may be available in your area
- Keep text messages short and simple, and avoid using slang or abbreviations
- Including an additional contact on your text message may prevent it from being received by 911
- Call if you can, text if you can't
- **Do not text and drive**

For additional information on text-to-911 service in Maryland, visit the Kent County Office of Emergency Services web site at <https://www.kentcounty.com/oes> and click on

the icon  .

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