STATE OF MARYLAND TEXT-TO-911 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT TEXT-TO-911 SERVICE

Q: What is text-to-911?

A: Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message from your mobile phone to 911 in the event you are unable to place a phone call.

Q: Can I text 911?

A: Text-to-911 is not available everywhere and may not be available when roaming. In the state of Maryland, text-to-911 is available statewide with AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon. To text 911, you must be enrolled in your carrier's text or data plan. If text-to-911 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message letting you know to contact 911 by other means.

Q: When should I text 911?

A: Text-to-911 is intended for use in three primary scenarios:

1. For individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech disability
2. For someone who is in a situation where it is unsafe to place a voice call to 911
3. For an individual who is experiencing a medical emergency and may be unable to speak

You should only text 911 in an emergency. Prank-texters can be identified and prosecuted according to local laws and regulations.

9·1·1
CALL IF YOU CAN
TEXT IF YOU CAN'T

Q: What are the challenges with text-to-911 service?

A: As with all text messages, texts to 911 may take longer to receive and respond than a voice call. Texts also do not provide the location of the texter, and could be received out of order or may not be received at all. Additional challenges include:

- Pictures and/or videos cannot be received by 911 via text
- If you include another contact on your text to 911 it may not be received by 911
- The preferred text language for texting 911 is English, however some limited translation services may be available

TEXT-TO-911 TIPS

Q: How do I text 911?

A: Follow these steps to text 911 in an emergency:

1. Enter 911 into the "To" field of a new message
2. Your first text should be short and include the location of the emergency and the type of service needed – police, fire, or ambulance
3. Press the send button
4. Answer questions from the 911 specialist and follow the instructions he or she provides
5. Text in simple words; do not use abbreviations or slang
6. Keep messages short

Q: How do I know that 911 has received my text?

A: If your text has been received, a 911 specialist should respond to your text. If text-to-911 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message from your wireless carrier letting you know that you must place a voice or relay call to 911.

Q: Is there a charge for using text-to-911 service?

A: Standard text messaging rates apply.

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