

Text-to-911 Implementation

Chief Jim Davis, Fort Worth Fire Department

Presentation Overview

1. Tarrant County 9-1-1 Emergency Assistance Board
2. What is Text-to-911
3. Why Text-to-911 is needed
4. When texting 9-1-1 may be better than calling
5. Things to consider before texting 9-1-1
6. Implementation Timeline
7. Projected costs & funding
8. Public outreach plan
9. Next steps



Tarrant County 9-1-1 Emergency Assistance Board Objectives

Ensure availability of the 9-1-1 system to all persons and entities within the Tarrant County 9-1-1 District.

Provide continuous improvement of systems and services through research and implementation of industry “best practices”.

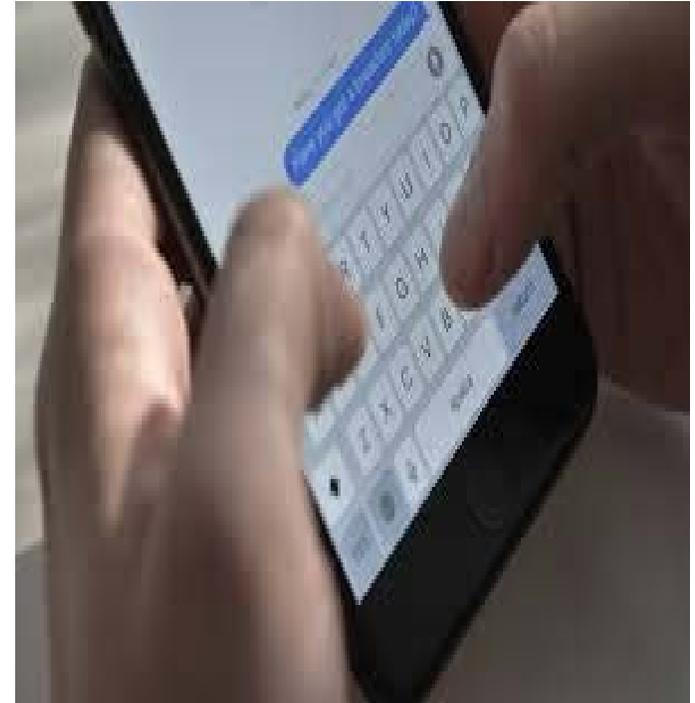
Enhance public education and awareness of available and future 9-1-1 services.

To provide leadership in the areas of legislation, regulation and technology.

Advise, inform and educate Telecommunicators (and other public safety personnel) to ensure adherence to federal and state emergency communications laws and requirements.

What is Text to 9-1-1

- Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message to reach 911 emergency call takers from your mobile phone or device.
- Tarrant County 9-1-1 District is leading the project through the leadership of the 9-1-1 Emergency Assistance Board:
- Six members:
 - Five members are voting members and one is a non-voting member
 - Two members appointed by the City of Fort Worth
 - One member appointed by the City of Arlington
 - One by Tarrant County
 - One by the Mayor's Council
 - One by AT&T.

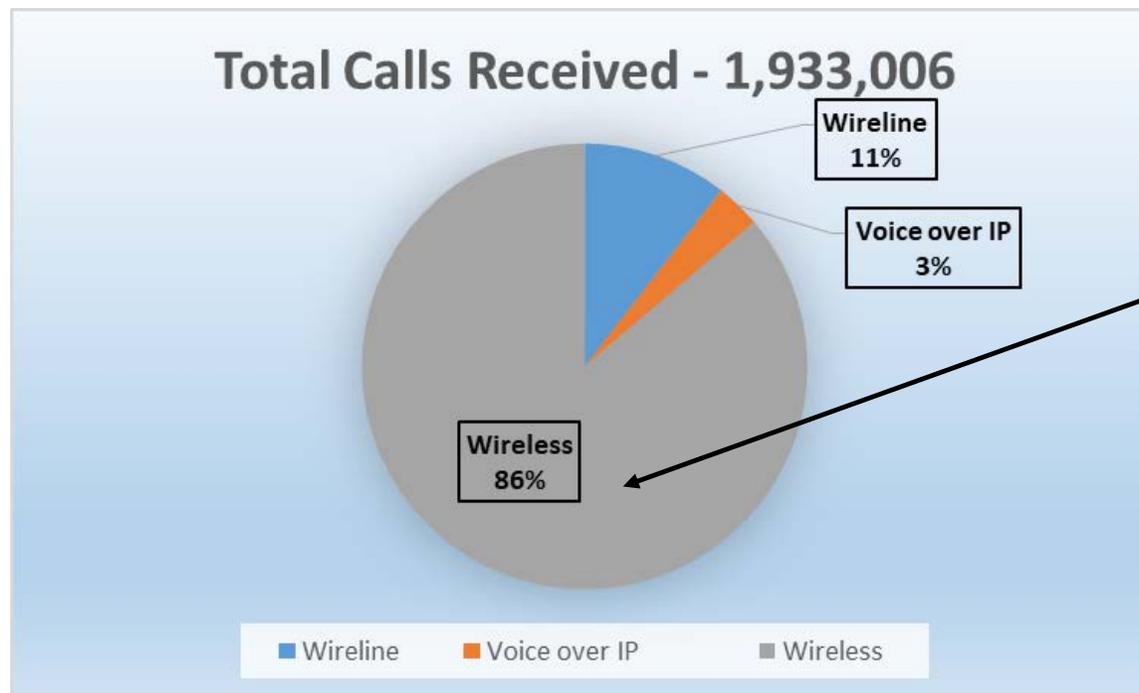


Fort Worth Reps –

1. Chief Jim Davis, FW Fire
2. Doug Hooten, MedStar

Why is text-to-911 needed?

- Text messaging is one of the primary ways people communicate today
- The 9-1-1 community is constantly striving to meet the evolving needs of the public



86% of total calls came in via cell lines

Based on current statistics, we are projecting to receive **26** text calls a day



When texting 9-1-1 might be better than calling Benefits to residents and visitors

- If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing impaired
- If you are unable, for medical reasons to speak into the phone
- If your safety would be compromised if you spoke out loud – for example, during a home invasion, abduction, or situations involving domestic violence
- If your cell signal isn't strong enough for a voice call to go through, service is limited, or your wireless battery is low
- Provides an additional way for the public to reach 9-1-1 should voice communications become unavailable

Text-to-911

Things to consider before texting 9-1-1

- Extra time involved in texting back and forth to receive information.
- Dispatchers often benefit from hearing background noise and the urgency in the caller's voice during a call.
- Calling 911 is still the best way to report an emergency. Calltakers can get vital information more quickly through a voice call.
- Just like 911 calls, texts to 911 should only be sent during actual emergencies.

Text-to-911 Implementation Timeline

Implementation target is set for June 2020

- Timeframe may have slight adjustment due to COVID-19

Federal Communications Commission is requiring carriers to make texting available six months after a valid request or text-to-911 service from a PSAP

This step occurred in January 2020, with the expectation that we will be available to accept text calls by June.

Text-to-911 Projected Costs & Funding



- Projected Costs:
 - One time costs: \$500k estimate to install the system
 - Annual costs: Annual maintenance estimated at \$250k
- Installation and annual maintenance will be funded by the Tarrant County 9-1-1 District
- Need to be clear on long term funding plans:
 - Will engage with Planning & Data Analytics Department as we work through these details

Text-to-911 Public Outreach Efforts

- Coordination of effort between City Communications, Police/Fire, and MedStar.
- Develop a city-branded demonstration video that includes Spanish and hearing impaired interpretation.
- Work with Tarrant County 9-1-1 and community stakeholders to get the message out to all communities in Fort Worth.
- Utilize water bill inserts and other methods used by City Communications, such as the city website and social media
- Media messaging both digital and print.
- Partner with the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities on messaging efforts



Text-to-911

Sample of community outreach material



We want to communicate to residents and visitors that texting 9-1-1 is available but the preferred method for reaching 9-1-1 is to call using your landline or cellphone

Text-to-911 Next Steps

- Engage with Planning & Data Analytics to understand long term funding requirements/commitments
- Start working with City Communications on outreach strategies
- Begin computer aided dispatch (CAD) upgrade timeline with Tarrant County
- Determine if an interlocal agreement is required
- Complete short training for employees of 9-1-1 dispatch center
- Complete transfer protocols



Questions

Please contact Chief Jim Davis

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