9-1-1

Call If You Can. Text If You Can't.

Text to 9-1-1
Frequently Asked Questions

Voice calls are still the best and fastest way to contact 9-1-1.

Text-to-9-1-1 is ONLY recommended when a voice call is NOT possible.

About the Service

What is "Text to 9-1-1" technology?

Text to 9-1-1 is the ability to send a text message to 9-1-1 from your mobile phone or handheld device.

Can I Text to 9-1-1 in Santa Clara County?

• Text to 9-1-1 is not available everywhere and is not always available when roaming.

• Text to 9-1-1 is currently available in the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County, and the cities of Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga and Sunnyvale. The cities of Campbell and Los Gatos are expected to offer the service by the end of 2019.

• You must subscribe to your wireless carrier's text or data plan in order to send or receive text messages.

• If Text to 9-1-1 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message indicating that Text to 9-1-1 is not available and to contact 9-1-1 by other means.

When should I text 9-1-1?

• Dialing 9-1-1 in an emergency is still the preferred way to request help, and the public is reminded to "Call if you can. Text if you can't."

• Text to 9-1-1 is intended primarily for use in three emergency scenarios:
    1. For an individual who is deaf, hard-of-hearing or has a speech disability.
    2. For someone who is in a situation where it is not safe to place a voice call to 9-1-1.
    3. A medical emergency that renders the person incapable of speech.

• ONLY text 9-1-1 in an emergency. Prank-texters can be identified and possibly prosecuted according to local laws/regulations.

What are the challenges with text-to-9-1-1 service?

• As with all text messages, Text to 9-1-1 may take longer to receive and respond to than a voice call, does not provide the location of the texter and could be received out of order, or may not be received at all.

• Text GPS location information is not equal to current wireless location technology.

• Voice calls are real-time communication and Text to 9-1-1 is not.

• Pictures or videos cannot be received by 9-1-1 at this time.

• If you include anyone else on your Text to 9-1-1, it may not be received by 9-1-1.

• At this time translation services for Text to 9-1-1 are not available; please text in English only.

Text-to-9-1-1 Tips

How do I text to 9-1-1?

• Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" or "Recipient" field.

• The first text to 9-1-1 should be short, include the location of the emergency, and ask for police, fire or ambulance.

• Push the "Send" button.

• Answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.

• Text in simple words –no abbreviations or slang.

• Keep text messages short.

How will I know if 9-1-1 received my text?

• A 9-1-1 call center should respond to the text.

• If Text to 9-1-1 is not available, you should receive a message from the wireless carrier stating that Text to 9-1-1 is not available and that you must place a voice or relay call to 9-1-1.

Is there a charge to text-to-9-1-1?

• Standard text messaging rates apply.

Can I text to 9-1-1 in languages other than English?

• Text to 9-1-1 is currently available in English.

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**Call If You Can.
Text If You Can't.**