



America's Growing 9-1-1 Crisis

America's locally based 9-1-1 system was a public safety breakthrough when it was introduced more than 30 years ago. But today, in too many communities, the system is inadequately funded, outdated, and stressed further by the new demands of homeland security and advanced communications technologies like wireless phones.

- **Funding:** Most states require wireless and wireline carriers to collect a small 9-1-1 fee on phone bills. Receipts are placed into public funds that are supposed to be invested in improved 9-1-1 services. Unfortunately, in these times of budget deficits and tight spending, some states are raiding these funds for other purposes. When jurisdictions are ready to upgrade their systems, many find the funds they were counting on are no longer available.
- **Changing Technology:** Almost 100% of U.S. communities have "enhanced 9-1-1" (E911) service, in which emergency responders can automatically obtain a call-back number and location from callers using hard-wired phones. However, fewer than 2% of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are able to locate callers who are using a mobile phone. This is unacceptable at a time when more than a third of all calls to 9-1-1 centers originate from mobile phones, and millions of Americans are increasing their reliance on mobile phones and other communications technologies.
- **Increased Demand:** The tragic events of September 11, 2001 and the continuing threat of terrorism within the United States have increased the need for a reliable 9-1-1 system. Citizens across the country are being encouraged to call 9-1-1 whenever they notice suspicious activity – and a large proportion of such calls will be made on wireless phones.

The time has come to fix America's 9-1-1 system and put it on a sound foundation for the future. NENA believes any E9-1-1 solution must:

- Enable citizens to contact help and be located automatically from any; communications device, anywhere, any time;
- Be deployed in all communities as rapidly as possible;
- Enhance the overall emergency system's responsiveness and coordination;
- Be predictably funded and make efficient use of scarce resources;
- Strike a fair balance of benefits and burdens among all actors; and
- Enable 9-1-1 centers to keep up with changing technology.

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