

## CALL IF YOU CAN



## TEXT IF YOU CAN'T

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### 9-1-1: Call if You Can, Text if You Can't Voice Calls to 9-1-1 Are Still the Best and Fastest Way to Contact 9-1-1

The St Joseph Emergency Communications Center announced July 11, 2016 that it has begun accepting text-to-9-1-1 service for Buchanan County. AT&T, Sprint, T Mobile, Verizon and US Cellular Wireless customers can now send a text (up to 140 characters) to 9-1-1 in an emergency. Text to 9-1-1 should only be used in an emergency situation, when placing a call is not possible: For instance, if the caller is deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired, or when speaking out loud would put the caller in danger.

#### **If there is an emergency and you are unable to make a call, remember these steps:**

- *Don't text and drive*
- In the first text message send the location and type of emergency.
- Text in simple words - Send a short text message without abbreviations or slang.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.

#### **Don't Abuse 9-1-1—Text-to-9-1-1 service is ONLY for emergencies.**

- It is a crime to text or call 9-1-1 with a false report.

#### **The Text-to-9-1-1 service will have many challenges.**

- A text or data plan is required to place a Text-to-9-1-1
- As with all text messages, messages to 9-1-1 may take longer to receive, may get out of order, or may not be received at all.
- If you do not receive a text response from 9-1-1, try to contact 9-1-1 another way.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 9-1-1 at this time.
- Text-to-9-1-1 cannot include more than one person. Do not send your emergency text to anyone other than 9-1-1.
- *Voice Calls to 9-1-1 Are Still the Best and Fastest Way To Contact 9-1-1*

**Remember, Text-to-9-1-1 service is not available everywhere in Missouri and the U.S.**

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**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?

- Text-to-9-1-1 is not available everywhere and is not always available when roaming.
- AT&T, Sprint, T Mobile, Verizon and US Cellular customers may utilize the service in Buchanan County.
- You must subscribe to your wireless carrier’s text or data plan in order to make 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?

- 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, Texts-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.

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### 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.

#### When will I be able to text-to-9-1-1 from all cell carriers?

- The St Joseph Emergency Communications Center is going live with the program July 11, 2016.

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

- The preferred language for texting to 9-1-1 is English.
- Translation services are limited.