



NEWS RELEASE

**ROCK COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER
LAUNCHES TEXT-to-911**

For Immediate Release

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The Rock County Communications Center is pleased to announce that customers of the four major wireless carriers (AT&T, Sprint, Verizon & T-Mobile), along with Cricket and US Cellular, can now send text messages to 911 in Rock County. There are more than 6,000 PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points) in the nation and the Rock County Communications Center is one out of approximately 900 of those centers to voluntarily offer this new service.

While Text-to-911 is now available, it is not intended to replace a voice call to 911. A voice call to 911 is still the quickest, most efficient way to reach emergency help. Text-to-911 is intended for:

1. Any person who is deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.
2. Any situation where a person could be in danger if someone hears them placing a voice call, e.g., domestic violence or home invasion.
3. In an area with poor cell coverage where a voice call may not work, but a text could.

Wireless customers in Rock County should keep the following in mind when sending a text to 911:

1. While deactivated cellphones work for making voice calls to 911, wireless customers must have a texting plan in order to Text-to-911.
2. Texting to 911 is the same as texting anyone else. Just type **911** in the "To" field (no spaces or dashes) and begin the message.
3. Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative, since the Rock County Communications Center will only receive an approximate location of the cell phone.
4. Text-to-911 should only be used for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire or emergency medical services. Non-

emergency issues should still be called in on the Rock County Communications Center's non-emergency line: **757-2244**

5. Text-to-911 currently uses (SMS) short message service (basic text messaging) so there is a 160-character limit per text. Also no pictures or videos at this time.
6. Text abbreviations or slang should never be used as it can confuse the 911 call taker and potentially delay emergency response.
7. Because Text-to-911 uses existing cellular towers within Rock County to route the text to the Communications Center, if a person sends a text in a border area, the text may be routed to another county, just like a wireless voice call to 911. If the other county does not provide Text-to-911, the person will receive an automatic bounce back message from their wireless provider advising them that Text-to-911 is not available and to place a voice call to 911.
8. Roaming is currently not supported for Text-to-911. Therefore if a customer does not have wireless coverage within Rock County they will receive a bounce back message from their provider advising them to place a voice call to 911.

In the coming weeks the Rock County Communications Center will release (3) short public education informational videos for Text-to-911 via our website (www.rockcounty911.com) and on Rock County police/fire/EMS social media pages, these videos will include an ASL (American Sign Language) video for the deaf community.

The public education theme will be based on the national Text-to-911 motto: **“Call if you can, Text if you can’t.”**

