

18-002 E-Media Text to 9-1-1 System

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE



E-MEDIA TEXT TO 9-1-1 SYSTEM

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to establish policy and procedures for the utilization of the E-Media Text to 9-1-1 system at all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) within the Department, which are located in dispatch at each of the patrol stations throughout the county, as well as Transit Services Bureau.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, Senate Bill 1211 was enacted, requiring the state to develop and operate a Next Generation 911 emergency communications system, including a Text to 9-1-1 system throughout California. In alignment with the new law, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules require all wireless carriers to provide their consumers with Text to 9-1-1 system capability via their cellular devices and to deliver those emergency texts to PSAPs upon request. The Short Message Service (SMS), also known as text messaging, provides support for wireless subscribers to send 9-1-1 SMS text messages to PSAPs by using the single code "911" as the destination address of the SMS message. The Department will provide the communities we serve, including the hearing and speech impaired, with equal access to emergency services via this Text to 9-1-1 system.

POLICY

Operation and Equipment

The E-Media Text to 9-1-1 system will be accessed and utilized in accordance with Department policy, utilizing the training and special equipment that has been provided by the Department. Complaint desk Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) positions at all PSAPs have been updated to log on to the local (station dispatch) computer, which is necessary for the Text to 9-1-1 system to operate. Additional monitors have been provided at all Text to 9-1-1 system PSAP positions, to ensure that CAD and Text to 9-1-1 system screens are always visible. Neither screen should be minimized at any time. There shall be no attempt to modify or alter computer access settings, nor shall this equipment be removed or used for other purposes, unless authorized by Communications and Fleet Management Bureau, in writing, via Department Supply Requisition (see MPP 2-10/070.00 regarding this process).

A minimum of one CAD complaint position per shift **shall** be logged on to the E-Media Text to 9-1-1 system website. Each station will be equipped with the capability for two CAD complaint positions to simultaneously answer incoming Text to 9-1-1 system messages. Each position is limited to two open Text to 9-1-1 system sessions at one time; therefore, it is highly encouraged that both positions are employed when there are two

complaint desk personnel assigned. Because Text to 9-1-1 system messages can only be received when a local station computer is logged on to the E-Media website, it shall be the responsibility of the station watch deputy to ensure the Text to 9-1-1 system is open and operational at all times on all designated positions when staffed.

Training

All personnel working a complaint desk assignment shall complete the Department's Text to 9-1-1 system training. Both the user and instructor shall sign the affirmation document included within the Text to 9-1-1 system training packet, which shall be maintained in the users training file and subject to review for policy compliance. The training packet will be provided by the instructor, and can be found under the Training tab on Communications and Fleet Management Bureau's intranet page.

Short of emergent circumstances, at no time shall any Department personnel answer a Text to 9-1-1 system message without completing the necessary Department training.

Procedure

As Department policy applies to all official phone communications, the Text to 9-1-1 system will fall under the same Department standards of professionalism, recording, and retention. Text to 9-1-1 system messages are expected to be handled using the established protocol for processing emergency voice calls for service, such as prioritization and transfers of emergency calls (see MPP section 3-07/090.10 for further reference).

Text to 9-1-1 calls that do not meet existing standards for an emergency shall be referred to the station's business line for routine handling. Complaint desk personnel will provide a pre-composed message (located in the pulldown menu box, marked "select an immediate response") directing the caller to the station's business line in the form of a hyperlink, enabling the caller to dial the number with one touch. If complaint personnel determine that an informant can call 9-1-1, complaint personnel should instruct the informant to do so to enable the Department to collect information more efficiently during an emergency. Exceptions will be made for the following;

- When the caller is hearing or speech impaired;
- When the caller is in an unsafe situation where placing a voice call to 9-1-1 would jeopardize their own safety or the safety of others; or
- Discretion will be used in special circumstances where cellular coverage prevents the person from placing a voice call for an emergency.

Complaint desk personnel will ask all pertinent information to ensure the safety of responding units. Relevant information will be continually updated in the call in CAD as it is ascertained via the Text to 9-1-1 system session and relayed to the responding unit(s). Complaint desk personnel will note that the call was received by text when creating the call in CAD. Under the "SOURCE" category, the letter "T" shall be entered as an indicator that the information is being reported via text. Complaint desk personnel shall also indicate "TEXT" at the beginning of the narrative for broadcast when the call is dispatched over the radio. Complaint desk personnel shall verify the location of the emergency with the caller before the end of the session by advising the caller that the requested assistance is being sent to the address provided by the caller;

- Example - "Deputies are being sent to 123 W. Main Street, Lakewood"

Translation

The current Text to 9-1-1 system is unable to translate conversations, define appropriate context, and decipher special characters used in other languages. No language line services are available for Text to 9-1-1 system messages, therefore in the event complaint desk personnel receive a foreign language text, a message should be sent directing the person to call 9-1-1 where translator services are available. Exceptions can be made where complaint desk personnel are Department certified translators or self-identified as proficient in that particular language **and** the written alphabet of the requested language does not have to be deciphered through special characters when written.

Acceptable Language

Complaint desk personnel should avoid the use of texting “shortcuts”, i.e., slang, emojis, non-standard abbreviations, and acronyms as they are not universally understood, have multiple meanings, and do not reflect the Department’s standard of professionalism. The caller should be asked not to use these shortcuts, etc., to help eliminate any confusion on the part of both parties. Callers are not required to oblige; however, in the event it becomes difficult to understand the caller’s need due to these shortcuts, complaint desk personnel will ask the caller to explain the shortcut.

Maintaining Contact and Transfers

Complaint desk personnel are responsible for keeping any Text to 9-1-1 system session open until Department units are on scene, the problem is resolved, or the session has been successfully transferred to another agency or the fire department, **and** it is clear that our response is not necessary. Once the session has ended, complaint desk personnel will no longer be able to correspond with the caller and will have to make a voice call to the phone number in the event that further information is needed. When complaint desk personnel are asked by field deputies to place a voice callback to the caller, a call should not be placed in cases where their safety, or the safety of another is in question. However, if after the responding deputy has been advised of the safety concern to the caller and the deputy is still requesting a call be made to obtain further information or relay important instructions, complaint desk personnel are authorized to make that callback. Under no circumstances should any Department personnel text the caller from their personal or business cell phone.

When a Text to 9-1-1 message is received and it is determined the emergency is occurring in another jurisdiction, that session shall be transferred to the appropriate agency. If that agency does not have Text to 9-1-1 capability, all pertinent information will be gathered, then relayed by phone to the appropriate agency, while keeping the session open with the caller until the outside agency has taken action.

All available agencies with Text to 9-1-1 capability will be pre-programmed into the “Select PSAP for transfer” pulldown menu. Text to 9-1-1 system transfers can be made by selecting the appropriate agency and clicking on the “transfer” button, and the complete text of the session will be transferred to the selected agency. The session should be kept open until contact is made with the appropriate jurisdiction in case additional information is needed; however, once the session has been transferred, control of the session and correspondence is given to the answering agency. Complaint desk personnel making the transfer should continue to monitor the text conversation to ensure the correct agency has been reached and there is no pertinent information to require any further action from Department personnel. At no point shall the caller be advised that they have reached the wrong agency and need to dial a different number to reach the correct agency.

Text to 9-1-1 Fallback Procedure and Equipment Failure

Currently, there are no fallback procedures for the Text to 9-1-1 system. If complaint desk personnel are unable to answer an incoming Text to 9-1-1 system message, the system will send the caller a “bounce back message,” with instructions to place a voice call to 9-1-1.

System unavailability, hardware malfunctions, and operative issues with the E-Media Text to 9-1-1 system shall immediately be reported by the watch deputy to the Text to 9-1-1 Help Desk at [REDACTED TEXT] or secondarily at [REDACTED TEXT] during normal business hours. The watch deputy shall also notify the watch commander who shall make a log entry documenting the issue and the time of the watch deputy’s notification to the Help Desk.

Additional system operation instructions are currently being incorporated into the Department Station Complaint Manual and Desk Operations Manual.

Any questions regarding this Field Operations Directive should be referred to Field Operations Support Services, at (323) 890- 5411 or FOSS@lasd.org.

REFERENCES

MPP section 2-10/070.00, Communications Equipment

MPP section 3-07/090.10, Emergency Incoming Calls - Business System

MPP section 3-07/090.15, The 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Number System

MPP section 3-07/090.25, Routine Incoming Calls

MPP section 3-09/004.00, Limited English Proficiency and Assistance Plan

LASD Desk Operations Manual

LASD Station Complaint Manual