



Soldotna Public Safety Communication Center

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH 911 LAUNCHES TEXT-TO-911

CALL IF YOU CAN; TEXT IF YOU CAN'T Beginning January 16, 2023 most citizens in the Kenai Peninsula Borough will be able to send a short message service (SMS) text message to 911 for emergency help **when unable to make a 911 voice call**. This service is available to wireless customers when within range of a cell tower.

Text-to-911 was not developed as a replacement to a voice call to 911 in an emergency situation, but rather as an enhancement to reach 911 services in three specific situations: 1) The caller is hearing/voice impaired 2) a medical emergency renders the person incapable of speech, or 3) when speaking out loud would put the caller in danger, such as a home invasion, a domestic violence incident, or an active shooter scenario. When in an emergency situation, all wireless callers should remember to **CALL IF YOU CAN; TEXT IF YOU CAN'T**.

Kenai Peninsula Borough citizens should keep the following important information in mind if they have to text 911:

- Customers should use the texting option **ONLY** when calling 911 is **NOT** an option.
- Calling 911 is still the most efficient way to reach emergency help. Texting is not always instantaneous, which is critical during a life-threatening emergency. It may take slightly longer to dispatch emergency services in a text-to-911 situation because of the time involved: Someone must enter the text; the message must go over the network and the 911 telecommunicator must read the text and then text back the caller.
- Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative, since the 911 center will initially only receive a cell tower location.
- Text abbreviations, emoticons or slang should never be used so that the intent of the dialogue can be as clear as possible.

- Customers must be in range of cell towers. If customers are outside or near the edge of a coverage area, the message may not reach the 911 center.
- Texts to 911 from areas where the service is not available will receive a “bounce back” message telling them to make a voice call.
- Wireless customers must have mobile phones that are capable of sending text messages. The texting function should only be used for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire or emergency medical services. For non-emergency situations, customers should contact their local public safety agency via a 10-digit non-emergency number.
- Text-to-911 should only be used to communicate between emergency help and the texter. No pictures, video, other attachments, or other recipients can be appended to the message.
- Please note that technology keeps improving. At this time, the entire iPhone 14 lineup with Apple Watch Series 8 and Apple Watch SE do have the capability to route emergency texts to 911 via satellite connections if the device determines that there is no cell coverage available. The iPhone itself will make this determination and launch a wizard to assist the user with establishing a satellite connection to local Text-to-911 services.

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For more detailed information go to [SPSCC Facebook Page](#)