

TEXT-TO-911 PROCEDURE

8008.1 PURPOSE

This procedure establishes guidelines for members assigned as Short Message Service (SMS) message call takers, also known as text messaging, from wireless subscribers.

8008.2 BACKGROUND

Text-to-911 provides equal access to emergency services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, as well as an alternate method of reporting emergencies when traditional avenues are unavailable. Text messaging provides support for wireless subscribers to send 911 SMS messages to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) by using a single code, 911, as the destination address of the SMS message.

8008.3 BEGINNING OF SHIFT

1. There shall be two (2) SMS call takers, hereinafter referred to as call takers, assigned to receive Text-to-911 messages.
2. Assigned call takers will log into the Comtech EMedia 9-1-1 platform, (<https://emediatcs.com>) that shall be utilized to process all SMS messages. Assigned call takers will ensure the software is open and operational.
3. If an assigned call taker leaves his/her workstation for any reason, he/she must log out and ensure there is another call taker available and logged in to receive SMS messages to avoid any SMS message going unanswered. Closing the browser will **not** log out the session and may cause system issues.
4. Call takers shall not turn down or silence the volume control. An audible alert indicates an incoming SMS message.

8008.4 ANSWERING SMS MESSAGES

1. SMS messages shall be answered with the same priority as 9-1-1 voice calls. SMS messages will be accepted and responded to immediately.
2. Call takers shall use the following pre-set greeting script, "Santa Ana Police 911, do you need police, fire department, or paramedics?"
3. All 911 calls and messages are processed equally without regard to hierarchy. Therefore, Text-to-911 messages shall be prioritized based on the nature of the call.
4. Call takers shall process no more than two text conversations at once. The nature of the emergency determines the highest priority SMS message.
 - (a) If a call taker receives multiple texts, he/she must respond to each message to determine which one takes priority.
 - (b) If multiple texts are received about the same incident, the call taker must respond to each message to ensure they are related and not different incidents.

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8008.5 PROCESSING TEXT-TO-911 CALLS

1. Obtaining the texter's location should be a top priority. Location accuracy varies between wireless providers and each Lat/Long provided should be treated as Phase 1. The maximum number of rebids allowed for an updated location is five (5).
 - (a) The highlighted letter/number in the center of the map indicates the number of times the location has been rebid/refreshed. Rebid should only be used if call takers are unable to obtain a good location for the texter. These limits should be considered as call takers continue to process the call.
 - (b) When transferring to another PSAP, the new call taker will receive a new allocation of five (5) opportunities to rebid/refresh the location.
2. Call takers should use the list of frequently asked questions that are designed as pre-set (canned) messages when possible; this expedites the call-taking process and provides consistency between calls.
3. Call takers will not use text talk, jargon, abbreviations, acronyms, or group multiple questions together. Questions will be spelled out and asked one at a time to avoid any misunderstanding with a caller.
4. Citizen's texting 911 who need police assistance, but do not have an emergency, should be directed to call the Department's non-emergency number.
5. The call taker should ask the texter if they can call in (make a voice call) and if it is safe for them to do so.
6. The call taker should ask the texter if it is safe for them to receive a call back from 9-1-1 and if they can receive one, should it become necessary.
7. The call taker should wait for a response before asking further questions.
8. When it is determined an emergency exists, a call for service shall be generated in CAD and officers should be dispatched.
 - (a) If the call taker is unable to decide on the nature of the emergency, an unknown trouble (927) call shall be entered into CAD with as much information as possible for responding officers. When unsure if suspicious circumstances are present, the call taker shall use good judgment and enter a call for service.
 - (b) If it is determined fire or EMS services are needed and the responding agency is capable of receiving text sessions, the call taker will transfer the call via text to the appropriate Fire/EMS agency. The call taker will send a text message to the texter stating, "Please stand by. I am connecting you with Fire/Paramedics."
 - (c) If the call is in progress, the call taker should keep the text session open to obtain updated information. He/she shall update the call for service with pertinent information until field units have made contact.
9. If there is no response from the texter after the initial text, but there is language within the original text to indicate there may be an emergency, the call taker can send a message asking the texter to call or text 911 if they have an emergency.

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- (a) If there is still no response, the call taker shall create a call for service using the call type 911 or 927, whichever is most applicable, based on the information received.
 - (b) If the language within the original text does not indicate there is an emergency, or it was possibly a mis-text, the call taker can end the session after sending the message asking the texter to call or text if he or she has an emergency.
10. Situations may occur when a cellular phone number is known. However, the ALI cannot be retrieved through the X-Y coordinate process. In this case, it may be traced through the cellular provider, but only when it is determined a life-threatening emergency exists.
- (a) Cellular providers have requirements and policies regarding the “pinging” of cellular telephones using GPS. If the phone is in the “On” mode, GPS signals help pinpoint the location of the cellular telephone. Contact numbers for individual cellular providers are located in the CAD Cardfile and can be searched for using the command “INFO”. A Communication’s Supervisor can also be contacted for assistance. In some cases, the approval of the Watch Commander may be required to seek confidential information from a cellular company.
11. The source code for all text calls will be 911T.

8008.6 TRANSFERRING SMS MESSAGES TO OTHER AGENCIES

1. The texter will be anchored to the originating PSAP until the call taker ends the session or transfers it to another jurisdiction that accepts Text-to-911 calls. Upon a successful transfer, the call taker may end their session by releasing the session.
2. Calls received from Text-to-911 from cellular telephones are routed through cell phone towers directly to the agency that serves the boundaries of where the call originates. On occasion, calls may be misrouted and intended for CHP or neighboring agencies. These calls should be transferred to the correct jurisdiction immediately. The texter will be passed on either by transferring the session or by relaying the information by telephone. The call taker shall advise the caller when they are being transferred, and their information is passed on.
 - (a) The texter will be sent the following pre-set message. *"Please stand by. I am transferring you and your information to the correct agency for assistance."*
3. If the texter leaves our jurisdiction, the call taker will transfer the text session to the agency responsible for the jurisdiction where the texter is located. If the receiving agency has Text-to-911 capabilities but is unable to receive the text (you receive a bounce-back message), the information will be relayed by voice. The call taker shall advise the texter they will pass on the information to the right agency. **If applicable, the texter can be directed to make a voice call to 911.**
 - (a) If the receiving agency does not have Text-to-911 capabilities, the call taker will maintain the session and relay the information to the appropriate agency by voice. The call taker will keep the texter updated as to who is responding. **If applicable, the texter can be directed to make a voice call to 911.**

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- (b) At-Will-Transfers may be done at any time by selecting the appropriate PSAP from the Transfer drop-down list.
 - (c) Location-based Transfers are enabled only when the texter moves out of our PSAP's service area and into another text-enabled PSAP's area. A second transfer button will automatically display with the name of the receiving PSAP. The call taker **must** refresh the location before transferring to receive the most accurate location.
4. To View a recent or previously transferred session
- (a) The list of sessions displayed in the Recent Calls queue refreshes when the call taker clicks the refresh button or sign out and back into EMedia.
 - (b) EMedia updates the list to reflect only sessions that were terminated or transferred from the moment of refresh back 24 hours.
 - (c) The list does not auto-refresh. It is possible to see numbers that are older than 24 hours if you have not refreshed. If the call taker clicks on one of these numbers, a dialog box opens. It allows call takers to choose between viewing the "stale" session and updating the Recent Sessions queue.
 - (d) If a session was recently transferred but is still active at the receiving PSAP, call takers can click the phone number in the Recent Sessions Queue to monitor the exchange between the texter and the receiving PSAP.

8008.7 TEXTS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

1. If a text call is received in Spanish, and the call taker is not receiving bilingual pay, the texter will be directed to make a voice call to 9-1-1 unless the other Text-to-911 call taker is bilingual and take over the session.
2. If the call taker is receiving bilingual pay, and he/she receives an SMS message in Spanish, he/she will process the text.
 - (a) If the text is from someone outside our jurisdiction who is a member of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, or someone with an emergency where it is too dangerous to make a voice call, the call taker will gather the necessary information and contact the agency with jurisdiction and pass on the information.
3. For caller's texting in a language other than Spanish, the call taker will direct the texter to make a voice call to 9-1-1.

8008.8 ENDING THE CALL

1. Before ending the call, the call taker will advise the texter the requested assistance is being sent to the address the texter provided; this helps confirm the location of the incident is correct. Ex: "Officers will be dispatched to 123 S Main St."
2. The call taker will send the pre-set message indicating the text session has ended and end the session by using the button. Call takers should keep in mind that text messaging sessions cannot be restored or initiated by dispatch. Text sessions can only be initiated by texters and terminated by call takers.

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8008.9 MULTIMEDIA MESSAGE ATTACHMENTS

In the unlikely event a text message contains multimedia content, the call taker shall not open the content, click any link, or open any dialog box containing the content. Instead, the call taker will indicate in the text of the call for service that multimedia content was contained in the text and the time stamp.

8008.10 END OF SHIFT

1. At the end of a call taker's shift, or a change of assignment, the call taker will log out of the system after confirming another call taker is logged in and available to receive Text-to-911 calls.
2. During a shift change, it is incumbent on both the incoming and outgoing call takers they each provide and receive briefing or call information relevant to any active SMS calls for service.

Text-to-911 is for official Department business. All sessions are subject to the same standards for recording and retention as 9-1-1 voice calls.