

**911**  
Call if you can,  
text if you can't!



## 9-1-1: Call if you can, text if you can't.

Text-to-911 now available in Humboldt County, **BUT**

**TEXTING SHOULD ONLY BE USED WHEN YOU ARE UNABLE TO MAKE A VOICE CALL TO 9-1-1 AND**

only some residents in Humboldt County will now have the ability to text 911 during emergencies.

The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) has upgraded the state's 911 network to an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system, which is more robust and capable of handling new messaging technology. This new technology will eventually allow citizens to also contact 911 using video and picture messaging. HSEMD is working with counties across the state to implement Text-to-911.

### What is text-to-911 and why would I want to use it?

It is the ability to send a "short message" (SMS) or other kind of text message to 911. Text-to-911 was developed primarily for citizens who are hard of hearing, deaf, or speech impaired. Texting can be used in situations in which a voice call to 911 would endanger the caller, such as during a home invasion or domestic situation. Sending a text to 911 can also be helpful in situations in which a medical condition makes it impossible for the caller to speak. If possible, it is always better to call 911 in an emergency.

Currently, only some cell phone carriers in Humboldt County have provided the ability for customers to text 911: Verizon, AT&T, i-Wireless, Sprint and US Cellular. Texting to 911 service from other carriers will be coming in the future, check with your provider to see when it will be ready to offer this service. Pre-paid plans that operate on the networks listed above must have a data plan included.

### Things to remember when texting 911:

- Voice calls are always preferred when possible.
- To send a text, enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field.
- The first text message to 9-1-1 should be brief, contain the location of the emergency and type of help needed.
- Push the "Send" button
- Be prepared to answer follow up text messages and questions from the 9-1-1 dispatcher. You may need to silence your phone if you don't want others to overhear your incoming notifications.
- Text in simple words – do not use abbreviations. Keep text messages brief and concise
- Photos and videos cannot be accepted by 911 at this time.
- Be aware that even if your cell phone carrier in your county supports text messages to 911, there may be times when you are unable to send a text if your cell signal is picked up by a tower in a county where text-to-911 is not available. If that happens, hang up and dial 911 to make a voice call to 911.

### Below are a few things to know if you need to text 9-1-1:

- Text location information is not equal to current location technology.
- **As with all text messages, 9-1-1 messages *can* take longer to receive, can get out of order or may not be received.**
- A text or data plan is required to place a text-to-9-1-1. Text-to-9-1-1 is not available if you are roaming.
- If texting to 9-1-1 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you will receive a message indicating that texting 9-1-1 is not available and to contact 9-1-1 by other means.
- 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 911 text to anyone other than 9-1-1.

For more information on text-to-911 in Humboldt County, contact Chereese Sexe at 515-332-5216 or [humboldt911@qwestoffice.net](mailto:humboldt911@qwestoffice.net)

**Do not text and drive!**