



GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY

CENTRAL DISPATCH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Traverse County now offers Text-to-911 services from four major US cell phone carriers. Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile, and AT&T customers in Grand Traverse County can now send a short message service (SMS) test message to 911 for emergency help when unable to make a 911 voice call.

Text-to-911 is intended primarily for use in specific emergency scenarios:

- For an individual who is speech or hearing impaired;
- For a person who is unable to call 911 due to a medical emergency that renders them unable to speak
- In the event of a crime such as a home invasion or active shooter situations where speaking might give away the location of a person hiding;
- Or in domestic violence situations where it's not safe to make a voice call.

When determining whether to make a voice call or send a text keep the following in mind:

- Text-to-911 is for emergencies only.
- Callers should only text 911 when calling is not an option.
- Texting is not always instantaneous, which means it may take slightly longer to dispatch emergency services in a Text-to-911 situation.
- Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative, since Grand Traverse County 911 may not receive accurate location information and will not be able to speak with the person sending the text.
- Text abbreviations or slang should be avoided so that the intent of the message can be as clear as possible.
- Those who use the system must have a cell phone that is activated and capable of sending text messages in order to reach 911 via text. There is no charge to the customer for sending a text to 911.

How to text 911 in an emergency:

- Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field;
- The first text message to 911 should be brief and contain the location of the emergency and the type of help needed - push the "Send" button.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 Dispatcher.
- Text in simple words – do not use abbreviations.
- Keep text messages brief and concise.

If any component of Text-to-911 is not operational, subscribers attempting to Text-to-911 will receive a bound back message: *Texting to 9-1-1 is not available and a voice call should be utilized.* Citizens should also remember that texting while driving is not safe.