



Learn About Enhanced 9-1-1 (E 9-1-1) Emergency Service

In some emergency situations, it may be difficult or impossible for a residential consumer to describe his or her location to a 9-1-1 operator. Enhanced 9-1-1 (E 9-1-1) technology automatically identifies a caller's location and telephone number to the operator, potentially saving time and lives. This fact sheet is provided by the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, to provide more information about E 9-1-1 and its availability.

Q. Does E 9-1-1 operate when calling from a traditional home telephone line?

A. Yes as long as consumers subscribe to traditional home telephone service. Since consumers receive traditional home telephone service at a specific address on file with their local telephone company, E 9-1-1 service has been in use for years in nearly every county.

Q. Is E 9-1-1 available when making an emergency call from a cellular telephone?

A. Currently, E 9-1-1 technology for cellular calls is only available in a few areas of Ohio. While 9-1-1 service is available for cellular calls, the location of the caller is typically not automatically disclosed to the emergency operator. The OCC believes that E 9-1-1 for cellular calls is needed across the state to protect consumers.

Q. Do residential consumers pay for E 9-1-1 technology?

A. Yes. Consumers with traditional local telephone service typically must pay a small surcharge on their monthly bills to help maintain the emergency system, including its ability to identify their address and number. The charge varies by county but can be as little as 12 cents per month.

In August 2005, cellular customers began paying a monthly 32-cent surcharge. This charge applies to each cellular telephone on a customer's account.

Money from the cellular charge is being distributed to individual counties to enhance their existing 9-1-1 systems in order to accommodate E 9-1-1 for cellular telephones.

Q. Is E 9-1-1 available when using an Internet-based telephone service to make an emergency call?

A. Currently, the availability of 9-1-1 or E 9-1-1 service varies among service providers of Internet-based telephone service (also referred to as Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP).

In addition, accessing a 9-1-1 dispatcher using a VoIP service may not function in the same manner as when using a traditional telephone service. For example, consumers with an Internet-based service may need to initially contact their provider to "activate" 9-1-1. Consumers may need to register their location with the provider and provide an update before they use the service from a different location.

Consumers should ask about the availability of E 9-1-1 and how it operates before signing up for service. For more information about VoIP service, consumers can review the OCC's "What You Need to Know About VoIP" fact sheet, available at www.pickocc.org or by calling 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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