

**INDIANA STATEWIDE 9-1-1 BOARD LAUNCHES TEXT to 911 for
VERIZON WIRELESS CUSTOMERS
LOCATION: Princeton, IN**

Summary information:

May 14, 2014 - Beginning today, the Indiana Statewide 9-1-1 Board, working with Gibson County Sheriff's Office, announced that public safety has taken a major move forward. Through Indiana's strong, coordinated approach to public safety, local 9-1-1 centers across the state are now providing the public with access to 9-1-1 through the use of text messaging from their wireless handset. INdigital telecom of Fort Wayne designed, built and operates the IN911 network for the State 911 Board, which provides service to 911 agencies throughout the state.

Verizon Wireless and its technology partner TeleCommunication Systems (TCS) are the first carrier to provide service. Three other carriers (T-Mobile, Sprint and AT&T) have also voluntarily committed that they will provide service. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) wants all other wireless carriers to provide text-to-911 by the end of the year.

Media Contacts:

Local 911 authority:

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Indiana Statewide 911 Board

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Full background information

9-1-1 is a local service, provided at the county level throughout Indiana. Indiana has a strong, coordinated approach to public safety.

Beginning today the Statewide 9-1-1 Board, working with the County 911 authorities, want to announce that public safety has taken a major move forward in our state. Local 9-1-1 centers across the state are now providing the public with access to 9-1-1 through the use of text messaging from their wireless handset.

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Verizon Wireless and its technology partner TeleCommunication Systems (TCS) are the first carrier to provide service. Three other carriers (T-Mobile, Sprint and AT&T) have also voluntarily committed that they will provide service. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) wants all other wireless carriers to provide text-to-911 by the end of the year.

Verizon Wireless customers in Indiana should keep the following in mind if they send a text to 911:

- Customers should use the texting option only when calling 911 is not an option.
- Using a phone to call 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.
- Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative, since the Indiana communications centers will receive only an approximate location of the cell phone, and will not be able to speak with the person sending the text. Text abbreviations 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 in the area. If customers are outside or near the edge of a county, the message may not reach the Emergency Communications Center.
- Texts sent to 911 have the same 160-character limit as other text messages.
- Verizon Wireless customers who use Usage Controls should remove this feature to ensure full text to 911 capability.
- Verizon Wireless customers must have mobile phones that are capable of sending text messages.
- The solution is available for customers who use the SMS provided by Verizon Wireless. It is not available for third-party text messaging applications that can be downloaded to the phone or for applications that do not use SMS technology.
- The texting function should only be used for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire or emergency medical services. Non-emergency issues should still be communicated to the local municipalities' communications centers through their non-emergency lines.
- SMS911 should only be to communicate between emergency help and the texter with no pictures, video, other attachments or other recipients appended to the message.

Communicating with 911 dispatchers by voice is more effective than text-to-911. Using text should be limited to the following circumstances:

- When calling 911 is not possible, such as if the caller is deaf, hearing- or speech-impaired.
 - If a caller is otherwise unable to speak, because of a medical condition (such as a stroke).
 - If speaking would be unsafe, as in the case of abduction or home invasion.
- This county began text messaging as part of a pilot program that started in January of 2013. Over the past year, many improvements have been made, training has taken place and public safety has worked to meet the May 15 deadline set out by the FCC.

As you hear more about text messaging in the new few days, our agency is always available at **(812) 385-3496** to answer questions or help those with individual needs.

Additional information is also available at www.in911.net and www.textty.com

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