

Capital Area Council of Governments

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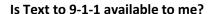
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CAPCOG Texting 9-1-1 FAQ

What is Text to 9-1-1?

Text to 9-1-1 is the ability to send text messages from a U.S. phone number to local 9-1-1 call centers. Only use Text to 9-1-1 if making a voice call to 9-1-1 is unsafe or not possible. This service is especially beneficial to those who are hard of hearing, deaf, or speech-impaired. Some other examples of when Text to 9-1-1 would be beneficial:

- The caller cannot speak due to a threat, illness or medical condition.
- The caller has poor reception and can only send out a text message.
- Phone lines and cell phone towers are overwhelmed and only texts can get through.



Text to 9-1-1 is available for Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell,
Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis and Williamson counties. Remember to "Call if You Can, Text if You Can't."

Verizon Wireless, AT&T Mobility, Sprint, and T-Mobile have agreed to offer the Text to 9-1-1 service within the 10-county CAPCOG region.

What are Text to 9-1-1 limits?

Text messaging is a "best effort service" provided by cell phone service providers; meaning cell phone service providers do not guarantee a message will be or ever was delivered. Since the Federal Communications Commission hasn't required them to guarantee the service, there is a chance that a 9-1-1 call center will not receive a text from a person having an emergency.

Text messages also can take longer to receive, can be delivered out of order or may not be received. Additionally, Text to 9-1-1 does not work if the sender texts using a group message, emojis, sends pictures or videos. Apps that text other app users (such as WhatsApp) or texting via social media (such as Facebook Messenger) do not support Text to 9-1-1.



What languages can be used?

Text to 9-1-1 is only available in English. However, voice calls to 9-1-1 can be processed in multiple languages because all CAPCOG 9-1-1 call centers provide emergency interpretive services.

How do I know a 9-1-1 call center received my text?

Since texting is a "best effort service" by all cell phone service providers, the only way to know a text reached a 9-1-1 call center is when the center texts back. If you believe a text has not been received by a 9-1-1 call center, call 9-1-1.

Why is it better to make a voice call to 9-1-1?

Voice calls to 9-1-1 are the most efficient way to reach emergency help. That's why the slogan for the service is "Call if You Can, Text if You Can't." Voice calls allow the 9-1-1 operator to quickly obtain information. Anyone can make a voice call to 9-1-1 using any wireless phone, regardless of the contract or plan.

The disadvantages of texting to 9-1-1 include:

- Texting takes more time and is limited to the text messages.
- Texting is a best effort service. In some instances cell phone service providers may not relay the message from sender to the 9-1-1 center.
- A person cannot text to 9-1-1 without a service contract that includes texting.
- Texting to 9-1-1 does not automatically provide the location of the phone texting.

How do I Text to 9-1-1?

- 1. Remember: "Call if You Can, Text if You Can't."
- 2. Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field.
- 3. The first text message to 9-1-1 should be brief and contain the location of the emergency and type of help needed.
- 4. Push the send button.
- 5. Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.
- 6. Text in simple words do not use abbreviations.
- 7. Keep text messages brief and concise.
- 8. Once you have initiated a Text to 9-1-1 conversation, do not turn off your phone until the dispatcher tells you it is ok to do so.