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Text/email alerts to 991 dispatch Call Centers are the best option

Our main competitor SaveStation, and others, rely on the text/email alerts sent via AiviaNet as their sole method of communication with 911 dispatch. Advocates for Health learned early on that this method of communication with 911 was full of errors, delays and miscommunications. Advocates implemented the use of, and incurred additional costs, to use a call center to address these issues.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) states “Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text to reach 911 emergency call takers from your mobile phone or device. However, because voice calls to 911 provide more information to 911 call centers, you should **always make a voice call to 911 during an emergency whenever possible.** “Even in areas where call centers accept text-to-911, existing voice-based 911 service is still the most reliable and preferred method to contact.”

Stearns County Sheriff’s Office states “Text-to-911 does not have the location accuracy of a traditional voice call and the texter will need to give the Dispatcher their exact location. **Persons who are able to make a phone call are highly encouraged to do so.** “Emergency response may be lengthened due to the time it takes for a text to be typed and sent, and delivery speed is not guaranteed. Dispatchers prefer to get a voice call so they can get cues from background noise and voice inflection.”

Firefighter Now states “You can email 911, but you will not get the same response times from EMS, Fire, and Police. Additionally, by email, you open yourself up to several system flaws that require communication with the operator, often in life and death situations. **Contacting 911 by email is not a good idea.** “

Many states and municipalities have legislation in place that prohibits 911 calls (or texts) that originate from a device, and not an actual person. Federal regulations also require that services that call 911 be able to provide a functional call back number. There are literally hundreds of state and local statutes out there. Here are two examples.

State of Maine: Prohibition against "9-1-1 calls by using an alarm or other device that automatically dials 9-1-1 to transmit prerecorded signals or messages."

State of Illinois: "The installation of or connection to a telephone company's network of any automatic alarm, automatic alerting device, or mechanical dialer that causes the number 9-1-1 to be dialed in order to directly access emergency services and does not provide for 2-way communication is prohibited in a 9-1-1 system."