



HISTORY

- The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA), represented by Board Member Arthur Rendall, participated in the Emergency Service Working Group (ESWG) in 2008 – an initiative of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) - to find a solution to provide essential 911 services to the Deaf, Hearing of Hearing and Speech Impaired (DHHSI) community of Canada via a mobile wireless handheld device.
- In November 2008, CRTC advised CHHA that text to 911 could not be done without enormous programming of infrastructure of Wireless Service Providers (WSP) and a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the USA also said there could not be a text to 911 service that would be cost effective enough.
- CHHA felt that the 911 was an essential service and that should be accessible to everyone.
- Not only did Arthur, with the help of communication engineers (Francis Fernandes from Bell Mobility), achieve the miracle that CRTC and FCC said could not be done, but it worked very effectively and was cost effective, so much that CHHA feels that this could be the template of future architecture for the Next Generation of 911 services for everyone in North America.
- The CRTC's decision followed a 2012 trial to assess the feasibility of rolling out such a feature on a national basis. The trial involved the participation of telecommunications companies, Canadians with hearing or speech impairments and 911 call centers in Vancouver, Toronto, Peel Region and Montreal.
- After years of discussions, debates and strategic meetings, CHHA is thrilled by the CRTC's announcement in January 2013 of the enhancements to 911 services that will enable Canadians who have hearing loss or speech impairments to communicate with 911 call centres via text message.
- As the service becomes available in different municipalities, Canadians with hearing loss or speech impairments must register their mobile phone number with their wireless service provider, and ensure that they have a compatible mobile phone. In the event of an emergency, they must first dial 911, and the emergency call centre will automatically receive notification to initiate a conversation by text message.
- This service will only be available in Canada.

- The voice calling remains the only way to communicate with 9-1-1 services for a person that is not deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or has a speech impairment. Text with 9-1-1 for the public at large is expected to be deployed at a later date.

CAN I TEXT 911 WITH MY PHONE?

Yes, but only if you are part of the deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech impaired (DHHSI) community in Canada.

During an emergency, T9-1-1 provides 9-1-1 call centres with the ability to converse with you using text messaging.

Before utilizing this service you:

- Must register for T9-1-1 with your [wireless service provider](#).
- Must have a compatible cell phone (check the link below).

HOW DOES IT WORK?

T9-1-1 provides 9-1-1 call centres with the ability to converse with a deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech impaired (DHHSI) person during an emergency, using text messaging.

When a DHHSI person requires 9-1-1 services, they dial 9-1-1 on their cell phone. There is no need for them to speak, as the 9-1-1 dispatcher will receive an indicator that tells them to communicate with the caller via text messaging. The 9-1-1 dispatcher then initiates text messaging with the caller to address the emergency.

A DHHSI person must register for T9-1-1 with their wireless service provider and must have an eligible cell phone before being able to utilize this service. This includes the ability to send and receive text messages.

Information on cell phones that meet T9-1-1 requirements is available on your [wireless service provider's](#) (put link here) Web site. The sign-up process requires that the applicant has a qualified cell phone.

T9-1-1 is considered a “best efforts” service due to the technology constraints associated with text messaging. As with any text messaging services, there is no guarantee a text message will be sent, delivered or received in a timely manner. In the unlikely event that this happens, the user will need to re-send the message.

Providing location information and the nature of the emergency in the first message is imperative. The 9-1-1 call taker may receive an approximate location of your cell phone with your 9-1-1 call; however it is important for the caller to confirm the exact location of the emergency.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR T9-1-1 USERS

- Text messages should be brief and concise.
- Text abbreviations and slang should never be used so that the intent of the dialog can be as clear as possible.
- If the DHHSI callers are outside or near the edge of the 9-1-1 service territory, the 9-1-1 call may not reach the appropriate 9-1-1 call centre.
- Cell phones that meet T9-1-1 requirements will be listed on your [wireless service provider's](#) Web site.
- T9-1-1 should only be used for emergency situations that require a response from police, fire or emergency medical services.

BEFORE YOU CAN USE T9-1-1:

You must be registered for the T9-1-1 service and establish contact through a voice call to interact with emergency services via text message. A text message that is sent to 9-1-1 from an unregistered cell phone and/or without a voice call will not be received.

Please contact your wireless service provider to register.

[Find out if T9-1-1 is available in your area.](#)

HOW TO MAKE A T9-1-1 CALL

- Unlock the cell phone keypad if it is locked. Some cell phones do not allow receiving and/or sending text messages if the keypad is locked, even though they allow a user to dial 9-1-1. "Unlocking" means entering your personal password or pressing an unlock button on the phone.
- Dial 9-1-1 on your cell phone to place an emergency voice call.
- Monitor the cell phone display to ensure that the call is connected. Shortly after the call is connected, you should receive an initial text message from a 9-1-1 call centre. If you do not receive the initial text message **within two minutes**, you may end the voice call and redial 9-1-1.
- The number you will see on your cell phone will have 13 digits and will begin with 555911.
- Once the initial text message is received, you should reply to this text message and provide the 9-1-1 dispatcher with the information that they are requesting, such as the nature of the emergency and your location. Keep your text messages brief and concise.
- You should keep the 9-1-1 voice call connected during the entire text messaging session if possible. This will permit the 9-1-1 dispatcher to hear any background noises that can be helpful to assess the emergency, and will provide enhanced 9-1-1 functions.
- You will know that the T9-1-1 session has been concluded when you receive the message "End of 9-1-1 Call".
- After receiving the "End of 9-1-1 Call" message, if you need to further communicate with the 9-1-1 call centre, you will need to initiate a new text

session by dialing 9-1-1 to re-establish contact with the 9-1-1 call centre and communicate again by replying to the text message.

INTERACTING WITH A 9-1-1 CALL CENTRE DURING A T9-1-1 CALL

If you have registered for the T9-1-1 service but do not receive an initial text message from the 9-1-1 call centre after calling 9-1-1:

- Ensure that you are using the cell phone with the telephone number that you have registered with the T9-1-1 service.
- Confirm that you are still in the coverage area.
- Check to make sure that you have adequate network coverage by looking at the signal strength indicated on your handset.
- Keep monitoring the cell phone display to ensure that the call is still connected.
- You could wait longer than one minute to receive the initial text message.
- If you do not receive the initial text message in two minutes, you may end the voice call and redial 9-1-1.
- If after two reattempts no response is received, then seek an alternate way to get assistance, such as ask someone else to dial 9-1-1 on your behalf.
- In instances where you do not receive replies to your text message, re-send the message.

You will know that the T9-1-1 session has been concluded when you receive an “End of 9-1-1 Call” message. If no “End of 9-1-1 Call” or further response is received, you can send a text message, asking if the 9-1-1 conversation has ended. If you receive an error message, the T9-1-1 session has ended.

If the session has been concluded, you will need to initiate a new text session by dialing 9-1-1 to re-establish contact with a 9-1-1 call taker and communicate again using text messaging.

WHAT TO PUT IN YOUR MESSAGE

The more specific your message, the more quickly help can be sent. An appropriate emergency text messaging format might be:

POLICE: road accident, junction High Street and Bridge Street, City Name

FIRE at 123 Main Street, City Name

WHAT IS TEXT WITH 9-1-1 (T9-1-1)?

- T9-1-1 provides 9-1-1 call centres and/or emergency services with the ability to communicate with a DHHSI person during an emergency, using wireless text messaging (SMS).

WHAT IS TEXT MESSAGING?

- Text messaging, or texting, refers to the exchange of brief text messages between cell phones over a wireless service provider's network.

HOW DOES T9-1-1 WORK?

- The T9-1-1 service must be activated in an area before it can be accessed.
- Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) must be deployed in the area.
- A deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech impaired (DHHSI) person wanting the ability to use the service must register for it with their wireless service provider.
- A compatible handset is required for this service. This can be verified with the DHHSI person's wireless service provider.
- When the DHHSI person requires 9-1-1 services, they dial 9-1-1 on their cell phone. There is no need for them to speak, as the 9-1-1 dispatcher will receive an indicator that tells them to communicate with the caller via text messaging. The 9-1-1 dispatcher then initiates text messaging with the caller to address the emergency.

CAN I EXPECT TO BE SERVED IN MY PREFERRED LANGUAGE WHEN USING T9-1-1?

- Local 9-1-1 centres, being the responsibility of the municipalities or provinces in which they operate, will attempt to honour your language choice (English or French) on a best effort basis, but there are areas where they may not always have the ability to provide bilingual service.

WHY IS A CALL TO 9-1-1 (VOICE CALL) REQUIRED TO INITIATE THE T9-1-1 SESSION?

- It establishes direct contact with the 9-1-1 call centre.
- It provides the 9-1-1 dispatcher with the caller's telephone number which will be used to initiate text messaging with the caller.
- It provides the 9-1-1 dispatcher with the approximate location of the cell phone.
- It establishes a voice channel that enables the 9-1-1 dispatcher to hear any background noises that can be very helpful to assess the emergency and to provide enhanced 9-1-1 functions.

IS T9-1-1 INTENDED FOR EVERYONE?

- No. The T9-1-1 service is only intended for deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or speech impaired persons.
- Voice calling remains the only way to access 9-1-1 services by a person that is not deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or has a speech impairment.
- T9-1-1 calls require more time than a voice call to communicate with emergency services.

WHY IS T9-1-1 NOT AVAILABLE FOR EVERYONE?

- Voice calling remains the only way to communicate with 9-1-1 services for a person that is not deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or has a speech impairment.

- During an emergency, time is of the essence and talking enables faster communication than texting, and there is a small chance that text messaging could be delayed or lost.

CAN ANYONE INITIATE TEXT MESSAGING WITH A 9-1-1 CALL CENTRE BY SENDING A TEXT MESSAGE DIRECTLY TO THE DIGITS “9-1-1?”

- No. Text messages sent to the digits “9-1-1” do not reach emergency services.

WHEN WILL THE T9-1-1 SERVICE BE MADE AVAILABLE?

- It will be made [available in specific areas](#) when network upgrades have been completed. These will be announced at a later date.

WHERE WILL T9-1-1 BE AVAILABLE?

- The service will only be available in areas that have received wireless and 9-1-1 network upgrades and that has been implemented by the municipality or the province and their emergency centres.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHERE T9-1-1 WILL BE OFFERED?

- This information will be available in the [service availability](#) section of this Web site.

CAN I USE T9-1-1 WHEN I TRAVEL?

- Yes, but T9-1-1 will only work within Canada and in areas that have implemented the required upgrades
- T9-1-1 will not work outside of Canada.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- The T9-1-1 service is free. However, an active wireless subscription is required.

WHAT CELL PHONES WORK WITH T9-1-1?

- Generally, 3G and 4G and GSM cell phones support T9-1-1.
- Contact your wireless service provider to confirm if your cell phone model will work with T9-1-1.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR THE SERVICE?

- Contact your wireless service provider or review the instructions on your wireless service provider’s Web site.
- An active wireless subscription and supported cell phone are required to use T9-1-1.

DO I HAVE TO UNLOCK MY CELL PHONE KEYPAD TO USE TEXT WITH 9-1-1?

- Yes. Some cell phones do not allow receiving and/or sending text messages, if the keypad is locked even though they allow a user to dial 9-1-1.

- “Unlock” means to unlock your cell phone keypad to send or receive text messages as you normally would. This may mean entering your personal ID password or simply pressing an unlock button on your device.

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