



SAN MATEO COUNTY POLICE CHIEFS' & SHERIFF ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE

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Public Safety Dispatch Centers in San Mateo County Now Able To Receive Text To 911 Emergency Calls For Service "Call if you can -- Text if you can't"

San Mateo County, CA – Effective immediately all San Mateo County Law Enforcement and Fire Agencies' 911 Dispatch Centers are equipped to receive and respond to mobile phone SMS Text to 911 messages. All phones or devices must include a text or data plan, be text capable, and have their location services enabled to send a text message to 911.

Callers who cannot communicate verbally are now able to use the text to 911 service to request help directly from local public safety agencies. This technology directly benefits members of our deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired communities as they will now have a more efficient and effective way to request emergency services in times of need. Additionally, those who find themselves in a situation where it may be too dangerous to dial 911 will have another option to call for help during an emergency.

For the deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired communities, texting to 911 is always an acceptable way to contact 911 for help. Others should only use the text to 911 feature when speaking to a 911 Dispatcher is not possible or may place an individual at risk. Examples include a domestic abuse situation, an active shooter incident, or an incident that has caused injury resulting in an inability to speak. **Otherwise, it is always best to dial 911 and speak with a dispatcher directly.**

Here are some helpful tips when using the Text to 911 service:

- Always provide the exact location of the emergency
- Text messages should be brief and easy to understand
- Do not use abbreviations, emojis or slang
- Remember that the ability to send/receive images and videos is limited and often dependent on the cellular provider
- Texts can only be received in English at this time - this service will be available in additional languages in the near future

*****REMEMBER*****

Only call 911 in the event of an emergency and only text to 911 when calling is absolutely not an option.

For more information on text to 911 visit the San Mateo County Communications Manager's Association website at www.CMASMC.com

“Call if you can -- Text if you can't”