

Did you register yet? Find out how this can save your life!

T9-1-1 text messaging for people with hearing loss

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. Information on cell phones that meet T9-1-1 requirements is available on your wireless service provider's Web site. 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.

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,

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***

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. You must have a compatible cell phone.

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. 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.

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

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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.

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*

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.

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 and Where 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. 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 the CHHA Website.

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.

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.

For more information you can contact:
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