



For Immediate Release: August 16, 2019
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Text to 9-1-1 Now Available in Union County

Union County Sheriff Jamie Patton announced this morning that *Text to 9-1-1* is now available in Union County. Sheriff Patton said the service has just finished testing with the four major wireless carriers (Sprint, Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T) and is now operational in the Sheriff's 9-1-1 Communications Center. The service can connect cellular devices to 9-1-1 Dispatchers via text messages. Text messaging is one of the primary ways people communicate today, especially young people. *Text to 9-1-1* can provide a significant benefit, especially when a caller cannot communicate verbally. Situations in which *Text to 9-1-1* can be used include when the caller is hard of hearing, deaf, or speech impaired; when a crime is in progress and a 9-1-1 voice call might create danger, such as a home-invasion; when the caller is facing domestic abuse, or when the caller is injured and cannot speak. The ability to text 9-1-1 dispatchers can be a life-saving resource. Patton stressed that *Text to 9-1-1* does not replace voice calling. "*Text to 9-1-1* is an option for the hearing impaired and those who are in a situation where they may not be able to say things out loud for safety reasons. However, voice calling 9-1-1 is still the preferred method, because its speeds up the process of getting emergency services on the way to those in need." said Patton.

Union County 9-1-1 Coordinator Pam Millhoan said, "It's very easy to use and works just like a regular text conversation you may have with friends and family." Director Millhoan offered the following tips for using *Text to 9-1-1*:

How to text 9-1-1 in an emergency:

- Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field;
- The first text message to 9-1-1 should be brief and contain the location of the emergency and type of help needed;
- Push the "Send" button.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 Dispatcher.
- Text using simple words—do not use abbreviations or emojis.
- Keep text messages brief and concise.

Below are a few things to remember about texting 9-1-1:

- *Text to 9-1-1* location information is not as precise as voice calling 9-1-1, due to the enhanced 9-1-1 features available through voice call mapping technology.

- As with all text messages, 9-1-1 messages *can* take longer to receive, may get out of order, or may not be received at all.
- *Text to 9-1-1* is not available if your cellular device is roaming.
- A text or data plan is required to place a *Text to 9-1-1* message.
- If texting to 9-1-1 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you will receive a message indicating that texting 9-1-1 is not available and to contact 9-1-1 by other means.
- At this time, photos and videos cannot be sent to 9-1-1.
- *Text to 9-1-1* cannot include more than one person. Do not send your emergency text message to anyone other than 9-1-1.
- **Do not text and drive!**



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Sheriff Malcolm J. "Jamie" Patton