

Issues Effecting 9-1-1 Nationally – 2010 Factsheet

The Importance of Effective 9-1-1 Services

- 9-1-1 is the [first link](#) in the [public safety response chain](#).
- Most crimes and other emergencies are initially reported to authorities through 9-1-1.
- The public has come to depend on a reliable, consistent 9-1-1 service nationwide.
- The more the public is willing to use the 9-1-1 system to report emergencies, the more effective the system is.
- Visible weakness or gaps in 9-1-1 service reduce the public's trust in the system, which greatly reduces the effectiveness of the system.

Current Weaknesses Threatening 9-1-1

- Gaps in the level of service offered by 9-1-1 public safety answering points (PSAPs) nationwide. Wireless Enhanced 9-1-1 is available in most areas in Colorado, but not all.
- As new telecommunications devices become available, it is essential that they be required to provide location information in their communication with 9-1-1 centers.
- The funding model for 9-1-1 services in most states, including Colorado, was based on surcharges applied to monthly phone bills. Pre-paid cell phone services or as-needed voice-over-Internet services have resulted in a drop in revenue for most 9-1-1 service areas, even as workload goes up.
- With the proliferation of wireless technologies available to the public, ensuring that sufficient radio spectrum is set aside for public safety is [essential](#). This is even more important as local, state, and federal agencies move toward a more integrated, interoperable public safety radio network.

The Future of 9-1-1

- The current 9-1-1 infrastructure [is 40 years old](#), and is limited in its capabilities.
- E9-1-1 must now transition into the Next Generation 9-1-1, or NG9-1-1.
- This requires transitioning from a conventional telephone system to a high bandwidth network based on an Internet protocol platform.
- This will allow dispatch centers to receive video and other data from an ever-growing range of devices that exist now or may enter the market in coming years. It will also allow information to be shared more easily between 9-1-1 call centers and other public safety agencies.
- Transitioning to an NG9-1-1 system will require investments in infrastructure, upgrading of equipment at the local level, additional training of personnel, and public education efforts.

What You Can Do

- Support the appropriation of funds for upgrading 9-1-1 infrastructure and grants to local 9-1-1 call centers for improving service.
- Support measures to ensure that sufficient radio spectrum is set aside for public safety purposes.
- Support measures that require telecommunication device manufacturers to cooperate with NENA efforts to build on their motto: "EMERGENCY HELP. Anytime, anywhere, any device."
- If you have not done so already, [join the E9-1-1 Caucus](#) to keep up-to-date on current issues affecting the 9-1-1, the first link in the public safety chain.

Issues Effecting 9-1-1 in Colorado – 2010 Factsheet

Funding Disparities

- Funding of 9-1-1 in Colorado is local in nature. Local 9-1-1 Authorities set telephone surcharges that are paid by telecommunications customers on their monthly phone bills.
- There is an economy of scale that makes it much easier to fund 9-1-1 call centers in large population areas than in rural areas.
- Many rural areas in Colorado have a small permanent population but a large tourist or seasonal population.
- This has created a situation where [rural 9-1-1 Authorities have difficulty adequately funding their 9-1-1 call centers.](#)
- Many rural 9-1-1 Authorities have compensated for this by raising their 9-1-1 surcharges, meaning that Colorado citizens living in small, rural communities are paying significantly more for 9-1-1 service than those in the metropolitan areas.

Transitioning to Next Generation 9-1-1

- 9-1-1, nationally, is in the process of transitioning from E9-1-1 to Next Generation 9-1-1. NG9-1-1 is an Internet protocol-based platform that will greatly enhance the responsiveness and abilities of the 9-1-1 network.
- Transitioning to NG9-1-1 requires the building of an extensive Emergency Services IP Network, or ESInet. The local funding and control of 9-1-1 in Colorado presents [challenges to the construction of this network in Colorado.](#)

Threats to Funding of 9-1-1 in Colorado

- Some prepaid wireless telephone service providers have interpreted current 9-1-1 surcharge legislation in Colorado as not applying to them. As more cell phone users every year decide to switch to prepaid cell plans, this means that [revenues from 9-1-1 surcharges are dropping even as the cost of providing 9-1-1 service is going up.](#) Colorado Senate Bill 120 is a bill designed to clarify that prepaid wireless users are required to pay 9-1-1 surcharges and to establish a new mechanism for collection.
- Colorado Senate Bill 135 is an attempt to exempt users receiving cell service under the Federal Lifeline program from having to pay 9-1-1 surcharges. The financial impact on the rural 9-1-1 Authorities of exempting any group of customers from 9-1-1 surcharges would be [severe](#) and would create a dangerous precedent.
- Proposition 101 is a legislative initiative that will be on the Colorado ballot this November. It stipulates, in part, that local 9-1-1 surcharges will be capped at 2009 rates and that any increase thereafter will be considered tax increases. This would make it nearly [impossible](#) for some 9-1-1 Authorities in Colorado to raise funds necessary for the replacement of facilities or equipment.

What You Can Do

- Be aware of how federal statute and regulation affects 9-1-1 back home.
- Make sure your state-level counterparts in Colorado are aware of the importance of ensuring that 9-1-1 is adequately funded.
- Contact us if you have questions about how proposed legislation can affect the 9-1-1 call centers in Colorado.