

Emergency Communication Networks and Next Generation 911

The [Emergency Communication Networks \(ECN\)](#) division of the [Minnesota Department of Public Safety \(DPS\)](#) oversees the statewide 911 program to ensure that 911 is available to all residents and visitors to Minnesota.

ECN works closely with public safety answering points (PSAPs) to support their day-to-day operations and ensure compliance with state law and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules. ECN also collaborates with key partners across the state, including the [Statewide Emergency Communications Board \(SECB\)](#), public safety leaders, elected officials and telecommunications providers.

In 2025, Minnesota's 911 system handled more than 2.8 million emergency calls, along with 36,000 text messages, reflecting the continued demand for reliable, accessible emergency communications.

What is Next Generation 911?

Minnesota's 911 network has remained largely unchanged since 1982. Next Generation 911 (NG911), a national initiative, brings this critical service into the modern era by leveraging new technology in two key ways:

- Upgrading the network from aging copper wiring to modern fiber-optic infrastructure, enabling faster, more secure and more reliable communication
- Routing calls more efficiently and improving caller location accuracy through standardized GIS data

Minnesota is actively moving 911 service into the digital age. Today, more than 90 percent of the state has updated its mapping data, helping dispatchers locate callers with greater precision. At the same time, ECN is building a high-speed, statewide digital network that will allow 911 centers to receive not just voice calls and texts, but eventually photos, videos and data from smart devices.

Advancing NG911 requires thoughtful coordination and planning. ECN is working with subject matter experts and partners across the state to develop a comprehensive strategic plan, ensuring the entire state is prepared to implement these important life-saving improvements to Minnesota's 911 system.

This transition will take several years, and the full cost is still being evaluated. Local PSAPs will also need to invest in new technology to keep pace and to leverage new features and technology. The statewide strategic plan will include cost estimates to help guide future budget requests and support informed decision-making.



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Funding NG911: The 911 Special Revenue Fund

Today, dialing three simple digits (911) to request emergency assistance is something most people take for granted across the United States. But that wasn't always the case. In the early days, access to 911 was inconsistent, varying widely depending on the town, city or county you happened to be in. Building out a reliable system also came with its own set of challenges, especially when it came to securing the necessary funding to implement and sustain a complex critical public safety system.

To address this, Minnesota created the 911 Emergency Telecommunications Service Fee (now commonly referred to as the 911 Special Revenue Fund) in 1995. The goal was to create a stable, statewide fund to support the continued rollout and expansion of the 911 network. Just as important, this statewide approach also helped create a consistent framework, ensuring that everyone, no matter where they live, has the ability to call 911 for emergency services.

Today, the fund is supported by an 80-cent monthly fee on every phone line in the state, including cell phones and landlines. In 2025, this surcharge, paid by approximately 6.5 million customers, generated more than \$68 million to help keep 911 services operating across the state.

The Legislature appropriates funds to ECN to support Minnesota's 911 program. This includes maintaining the critical network that delivers emergency calls, as well as supporting 97 local PASPs across the state. These centers are responsible for receiving and processing emergency calls and dispatching the appropriate law enforcement, fire or medical response to the caller.

While ECN uses its current budget to operate and continuously improve the 911 system, additional resources will likely be needed in the coming years. As Minnesota transitions to NG911, the costs associated with upgrading technology and a more advanced network represent a significant, but necessary, investment. These improvements will modernize the system and ultimately help ensure that all Minnesotans are safer and better served in times of an emergency.

Questions?

Leah Palmer

Director, Emergency Communication Networks

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

651-201-7546

Leah.Palmer@state.mn.us

