

Text-to-911 is available in Fayette County and in every county in Iowa. This allows a cell phone user to contact 9-1-1 using text messaging. If your text is answered in Fayette County, but you are reporting an emergency in another county, Fayette County is capable of text transfer to the appropriate agency.

To be able to text 9-1-1 in emergencies, you need a valid data service plan. Pre-paid phones that have a data plan work also. Phones which do not have a data plan, your old phone you still have when you upgraded, are not text capable.

It is more efficient to call 911 in an emergency. Texting can be helpful in situations where a medical condition makes it impossible for the caller to speak. Or in situations where a voice call to 911 would endanger the caller, such as during a home invasion or domestic situation. If this is the case, remember to silence your text notifications.

Please don't text 9-1-1 just to test the service, remember:

“Call 9-1-1 if possible, Text 9-1-1 when necessary”

Things to remember when texting 911:

- 1) Voice calls, when possible, are the preferred and more efficient method. Contrary to some belief it is not faster to text than to call.
- 2) To send a text, enter the numbers “911” in the “To” message field. Keep the text message brief and include the location of the emergency and type of help needed. Longer messages will be broken into multiple text messages and may not arrive in Dispatch in the same order or sequence as sent. Push the “Send” button.
- 3) Be prepared to answer follow up text messages and questions from the 9-1-1 Dispatcher. You may need to silence your phone if you don't want others to overhear your incoming message notifications.
- 4) Text in plain language not text ‘slang’. Don't use abbreviations that could be confusing.
- 5) Photos and video cannot be sent by text to 911 at this time.
- 6) Text location data is not equal to current wireless location technology, so do not expect the Dispatcher to know your location from your text. The PSAP will only get tower information.
- 7) Be aware there may be times when text to 911 service is temporarily unavailable. If that happens, you will receive a bounce-back message indicating your text message was not received. In that case you will need to place a voice call to 911.
- 8) Text to 911 cannot be sent in a group message. Do not attempt send a text to anyone else at the same time you text to 9-1-1.
- 9) Do not text while driving. If you need to send a text, pull safely to the side of the road and turn on your hazard lights before you text.
- 10) Text messages can take longer to receive and send than dialing 911 and talking to a Dispatcher.

The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) has upgraded the state's 911 network to an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system, which is more robust and capable of handling new messaging technology. Eventually handling photos and video messages.

If you have questions or concerns, you may email Brenda Vande Voorde – 911 Coordinator at bvandevoorde@fayettecountysos.us