



911

I am hearing impaired. Is there any other way to reach 911 besides calling?

Along with calling the number 911 for emergency assistance, Oneida County residents now have the option to text 911. The ability to text Oneida County 911 became effective in November 2014 and is only for AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon users at this time. Just because Text-to-911 works in Oneida County, do not assume that it will work in other adjacent areas as other local PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points) do not have this capability, yet. Text-to-911 is only available in limited areas throughout 14 states at this time and although, the FCC is requiring that all wireless providers begin delivering emergency texts to requesting PSAPs by June 30, 2015, the FCC does not have the authority to require all PSAPs to accept text messages. (<http://www.fcc.gov/text-to-911>)

Being able to text 911 is beneficial to those who are hearing impaired, unable to speak due to medical issues or other special circumstances such as hiding from danger. It is a valuable tool, but should not replace calling 911. When possible, calling 911 is preferred to texting 911 as information is relayed much easier and quicker through spoken conversation as opposed to texting back and forth.

To initiate a Text-to-911, enter 911 as your contact and write a text message as you normally would. What should be included in the first text is the address where the emergency is occurring and a brief description of what the emergency is. Upon first receiving the text, the 911 dispatcher will ask if it is possible for you to call 911. If not, the dispatcher will continue texting with you to obtain all necessary information on the emergency. We will need to know the full address including any apartment or lot number and exactly what is happening. Be brief and to the point but refrain from using abbreviations. Please stay focused, on topic and try to answer the dispatcher's questions to the best of your ability. Also, emoticons, photos and videos will not work so do not try to send them.

To sum it up, only text when you cannot call. Make sure to give the correct address of the emergency with apartment or lot number, if it pertains. Be brief and concise in your explanation of what is happening. Do not try to send photos, videos or use emoticons as the system is not set up to accept these, yet.