



Highland Park Department of Public Safety
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Press Release

for immediate release

Town of Highland Park Has Implemented Text to 9-1-1 within its Jurisdiction

February 26, 2018 (Highland Park, Texas) – The Highland Park Department of Public Safety has added a new communication tool to its dispatch center: Text to 9-1-1. “Call if you can - Text if you can’t” is the slogan developed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to describe this newest form of 9-1-1 notification. Text to 9-1-1 is designed to assist those who are hearing or speech impaired, and those individuals who simply – due to the nature and circumstances of the emergency – are unable to make a voice call to 9-1-1.

Voice calls to our 9-1-1 dispatch center remain the preferred form of notification for our communications specialists (dispatchers). Text to 9-1-1 is not intended to replace the reporting of an emergency by phone. That said, there may be instances where a voice call is not practical or safe given the nature of the emergency, location of the victim, and/or location of the offender (examples include home invasion, assault family violence, or residential/business burglary in-progress). “HPDPS has joined the growing list of agencies who have the ability to receive Text to 9-1-1 messages,” said Rick Pyle, Director of Public Safety, “Additionally, it allows for two-way communication so our dispatchers may continue to gather as much information as possible about the emergency.” Within the town limits of Highland Park, the HPDPS dispatch center is capable of receiving Text to 9-1-1 messages from the following wireless carriers: AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon.

Sending a text message to 9-1-1:

- Open the text messaging application within your smart phone and enter “911” in the “To” field
- Initially the text message to “911” should be brief, but contain vital location such as:
1) Location of the emergency; and 2) Type of emergency
- After typing the emergency information into the free form text box, press the “send” button

- Upon successful receipt of the Text to 9-1-1 message a dispatcher will reply to your message. Note: Placing your phone on silent may prevent anyone from being alerted to your location, or that you've notified 9-1-1 by a text message
- The dispatcher may need additional information about the emergency. Be prepared to respond to the dispatcher
- When using Text to 9-1-1, do not send a "group text" as this may prevent the message being delivered to 9-1-1
- Do not text and drive

The following considerations are important when utilizing the Text to 9-1-1 service in Highland Park:

- A cellular data plan with text messaging is required to send a Text to 9-1-1 message
- Limitations of the cellular network architecture (physical location of antenna), coverage area, signal strength, and connectivity may hinder the successful delivery of a Text to 9-1-1 message to the HPDPS dispatch center
- The initial text message should include the exact location of your emergency. Wireless data does not provide your precise location when the Text to 9-1-1 message is sent
- If Text to 9-1-1 is not available in your area, a bounce back message from the wireless carrier should be delivered. If a bounce back message is received, a voice call to 9-1-1 is required
- Videos, photos, or emojis cannot be sent to 9-1-1 at this time
- The Text to 9-1-1 communication, once initiated with a HPDPS dispatcher, will remain open until the communication is closed by the dispatcher

Those in need of emergency public safety services in Highland Park, whether police, fire, or EMS, are encouraged to place voice calls to 9-1-1 in an emergency; however, Text to 9-1-1 is now a notification option for those persons who need to communicate to 9-1-1 via a text message.

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