



Denco Area 9-1-1 District

1075 Princeton Street ▪ Lewisville, TX 75067 ▪ Mailing: PO BOX 293058 ▪ Lewisville, TX 75029-3058
Phone: 972-221-0911 ▪ Fax: 972-420-0709

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Greg Ballentine
Deputy Executive Director
972-221-0911

Denco 9-1-1 System Upgraded to Accommodate Text Messaging Voice Calls to 9-1-1 Are Still the Best and Fastest Way to Get Help

The Denco Area 9-1-1 District announced today that it has implemented text-to-911 service for all of Denton County and the City of Carrollton. Wireless customers whose providers have implemented the technology can now send a text (up to 140 characters) to 9-1-1 in an emergency. Text to 9-1-1 should only be used in an emergency situation and only when placing a voice call is not possible.

Jack Miller, Chairman of the Denco Area 9-1-1 District Board of Managers said staff has been working with its vendors for several years to implement this new technology. "We are pleased to be able to offer this enhanced capability to citizens and visitors in the district," Miller said.

Denco has initiated a public education campaign to inform citizens about this new feature and the proper use of text-to-911. "This enhancement will be of great value in the rare situation of a citizen being unable to make a voice call to 9-1-1 in an emergency," said Mark Payne, Denco Executive Director. "The primary benefit will be the improved ability for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech impaired citizens who need emergency assistance," Payne added.

Dennae Shirley, a teacher at the Denton Regional Day School Program for the Deaf said, "When I heard of the Denco Text-to-911 system, I was overwhelmed with relief." She added, "With the capability for two-way texting, I can be confident my requests for emergency services will be understood."

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Citizens who find themselves in an emergency situation and unable to make a voice call to 9-1-1 should remember these steps:

- Don't text and drive
- When sending a text to 911, do not include dashes or any other characters.
- In the first text message send the location and type of emergency.
- Text in simple words - Send a short text message without abbreviations or slang.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 911 at this time.
- Text-to-911 cannot include more than one person. Do not send your emergency text to anyone other than 911.
- Voice calls to 9-1-1 are always the best and fastest way get help.

While Text-to-911 service is available throughout the Denton County, it may not be available once you leave Denton County and, like wireless coverage gaps, could be impacted by service availability. If you do not receive a text response from a 9-1-1 operator, make a voice call to 9-1-1.

Shirley commented, "Text-to-911 will allow the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community to communicate our needs with confidence and clarity so the appropriate help comes prepared to take action. Thank you to all who have made this possible!"

According to Payne, "The Denco Area 9-1-1 District received the Next Generation 9-1-1 Institute's 2015 Outstanding Program Award for overall excellence in serving the public including deployment, management and integration of new technology. We are pleased to take this next step in advanced 9-1-1 services." Payne added, "This latest enhancement confirms the forward thinking leadership of Denco's Board of Managers and their persistence to pursue and deliver the integrated text-to-911 service. The Board of Managers and staff are committed to deliver the best solutions available to meet the needs of citizens in the district."

About Denco: Denco Area 9-1-1 District is the coordinating agency for 9-1-1 emergency service throughout Denton County and the entire City of Carrollton. The district was created by special election in 1987 and is overseen by a locally elected or appointed Board of Managers. The District provides the network, database, call processing and mapping equipment for 9-1-1 service as well as 24/7 support for the system, public education and Telecommunicator training.

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