



NEWS

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FCC ISSUES CONSUMER ADVISORY ON WIRELESS 911 *Chairman Powell Says Consumers Entitled to Enhanced 911 Services*

The Federal Communications Commission today issued a Consumer Advisory listing issues and questions consumers should ask about whether emergency responders have the capability of identifying phone numbers and exact locations of 911 calls from mobile phones.

The Consumer Advisory explained that 911 call centers and wireless carriers are working on installing Enhanced 911 capability (E911) so that 911 operators will have specific information on the source and location of wireless 911 calls, like they do today from 911 calls from wireline phones, that will enable rapid dispatch of help to emergency wireless callers. More than one-third of emergency 911 calls now come from mobile phones. The FCC is working aggressively to encourage state and local government and wireless carriers to deploy the necessary technology to make high tech wireless E911 a reality.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell said, "When you dial 911, you expect police to come to the rescue and be able to find you. Americans deserve effective emergency response using the best technology available. Government officials and the wireless industry need to redouble their efforts to make this a number one priority."

Powell called for state and local government officials to accelerate conversion of their public safety call centers to receive E911 calls. Powell said, "Wireless consumers in all but a handful of states pay E911 surcharges on their bills that go to state and local governments for E911. Consumers have every right to expect that money to be used for E911 upgrades."

Powell cited a National Emergency Number Association report stating that in many states and localities the surcharge funds "are being siphoned away to pay for other government programs." Powell said, "States that are diverting wireless 911 funds to other uses are slowing efforts to deploy this life-saving technology." Powell said he was pleased to join the efforts on this issue of the Congressional E911 Caucus under the leadership of Senators Conrad Burns and Hilary Rodham Clinton and Representatives Anna Eshoo and John Shimkus.

He also urged consumers to ask about more than just price when buying wireless service. "Consumers need to know that some wireless carriers have invested more than others in implementing E911. When you shop for wireless service, ask whether the carrier has implemented E911 in your area and whether the phone you're buying works for E911. Not all carriers are created E911 equal, and consumers have a right to know this."

The FCC Consumer Advisory is attached.

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