

General FAQs

G.1 What is Wireless Enhanced 9-1-1 (W E9-1-1)?

W E9-1-1 is a service whereby wireless 9-1-1 calls are processed through the E9-1-1 network to provide a wireless caller's telephone number, location, and other information to public safety answering points (PSAPs), similar to a wire-line call. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Order 94-102 mandates that wireless service providers (WSPs) deliver the service no later than 6 months after receiving a valid request from a PSAP. The PSAP must be able to receive and use the data being sent in order to qualify as a valid request. WE9-1-1 service is defined in two phases:

- Phase I – As of April 1998, WSPs are required to provide the 9-1-1 caller's callback number (CBN) and originating cell tower/sector identification (in California the cell site address and antenna directional) that received the call.
- Phase II – As of October 2001, WSPs are required to provide a more precise location of the caller's latitude and longitude, generally within a 50 to 300 meter accuracy, in addition to the Phase I data.
Note: Regarding Phase II, all WSPs have submitted to the FCC and had approved waivers so their Phase II timelines have generally been extended well beyond October 2001. In summary, Phase II will be implemented progressively in California starting in 2002; however, WSPs have until December 2005 to fully comply with the Order.

G.2 What requirements does the FCC Order place on PSAPs?

The FCC Order specifies that PSAPs must be able to receive and use the wireless data being delivered by WSPs. Additionally, a formal request must be submitted to WSPs, which starts a 6-month implementation time clock. Without the capability to receive and use the Phase I and Phase II data being delivered, PSAP requests will likely be deemed invalid by WSPs.

G.3 Where has W E9-1-1 been implemented?

As of October 2003, Phase II is starting to take hold across the country. There are some states that have a significant percentage of Phase II service completed, while many others have yet to begin. In California the six major WSPs have begun to provide W E9-1-1 service (Phase I and Phase II) as part of a statewide plan. Most of the Phase II service installed in California to date has been in Los Angeles County; however, the San Francisco Bay Area Region recently began cutting to live Phase II in Santa Clara County. The San Diego Region will follow the Bay Area, Sacramento will follow San Diego, and so on. For a schedule, see the Wireless E9-1-1 Statewide Plan Map on this website at:
<http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/td/911/WE911Statewideplanmap.pdf>.

G.4 Is California behind other States in implementing W E9-1-1?

Some states have a greater percentage of Phase II completed than California and other states a lesser percentage. As of October 2003, about 8% of the cell sectors (cellular antenna coverage areas) in California are capable of delivering Phase II. The plan is to complete most of the State before the end of 2005, which is the date when all WSPs must have both their network and handset-based solutions completed. *Note: Even though cell sectors may be capable of delivering Phase II calls to PSAPs, handset-based Phase II solutions require the cellular subscriber to acquire a new phone. WSPs have until the end of 2005 to complete this upgrade for their subscribers.*

G.5 When will W E9-1-1 be available at my PSAP?

The W E9-1-1 statewide implementation plan is based on the largest call volume areas served by the CHP Communication Centers. Please see the W E9-1-1 Statewide Plan Map at:
<http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/td/911/WE911Statewideplanmap.pdf>. Local agencies located

within the respective CHP communications center jurisdictional boundaries will be eligible to receive wireless E9-1-1 calls directly or by transfer starting in the year shown on the plan.

G.6 Do I have to answer W E9-1-1 calls directly?

No. Every PSAP chooses whether or not to take W E9-1-1 calls directly. Per Public Utilities Code 2892(c), PSAPs may answer wireless 9-1-1 calls only if the local agency, CHP, and the State Department of General Services together determine it is in the best interest of public safety. The CHP is the default PSAP for W E9-1-1, so if no agreement is reached calls will be routed to the CHP. If interested, local PSAPs should begin the process by contacting the State 9-1-1 Office.

G.7 Why should local PSAPs answer W E9-1-1 calls directly?

Local PSAPs should answer calls directly if they are able to provide prompt 9-1-1 service to their citizens and others passing through their local jurisdiction. Routing of the calls locally usually provides much better response times for callers. Sharing the wireless 9-1-1 call load between the CHP and local agencies also helps provide better overall service to those 9-1-1 callers routed to the regional CHP center by reducing the call volume and, therefore, response times at the CHP. Ultimately this could save lives. The CHP currently receives an abundant number of calls, sometimes causing callers to be queued for minutes before ultimately being transferred to local agencies.

G.8 Does CHP have W E9-1-1?

As of October 2003, only in Los Angeles does the CHP have a phone system that can accommodate E9-1-1 calls. CHP communications centers are being upgraded to E9-1-1 as part of the statewide plan to implement wireless E9-1-1. Until then, CHP communications centers will continue to use the public switched telephone network (PSTN) to answer wireless 9-1-1 calls. The CHP does have Caller ID-capable PSTN phone systems, so they receive Caller ID for all calls not blocked for this feature. This yields a callback number on approximately 70% of all wireless 9-1-1 calls. CHP also has segmented their PSTN trunks so they receive an approximate location (within miles) of where the call originated. However, since the PSTN 9-1-1 calls are not processed through the E9-1-1 network, the call data does not currently flow with the calls when transfers are made from the CHP to other agencies. The CHP is being integrated into the E9-1-1 network, in accordance with the statewide W E9-1-1 plan, starting with the CHP Los Angeles, Vallejo, and San Diego Communications Centers.

G.9 Will I get ANI and ALI with W E9-1-1 calls?

Yes. The automatic number identification (ANI) and the automatic location identification (ALI) will be provided to local PSAPs once W E9-1-1 has been implemented in your region. Regarding the ALI, you will receive either the Phase I wireless ALI format or Phase I/II wireless ALI format, depending on your PSAP's readiness and capabilities. See the FAQs that follow for more detail on the W-ALI displays.

G.10 I heard the Los Angeles region was to be implemented by October 2001. What happened?

The Los Angeles County implementation was originally targeted to begin at the CHP Los Angeles Center in October 2001, in accordance with the FCC timeline for the delivery of Phase II services. Since that time the FCC granted Phase II waivers to all the major WSPs, extending the timelines for Phase II service. It was decided after the FCC waivers were granted that local PSAPs should be included early in Los Angeles as well as other regions, which added complexity and time to the project. Furthermore, it was very difficult to facilitate the necessary contractual agreements and/or tariffs needed by the incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) in order for them to support delivery of W E9-1-1 service. Without these instruments in place, the ILECs would not deliver the service. There have also been many technical challenges that have slowed implementations. For an updated statewide schedule, see <http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/td/911/WE911Statewideplanmap.pdf>.

Additional Note: Los Angeles County was used as a metropolitan model for the statewide implementation of W E9-1-1. The State worked with WSPs and ILECs over several years to develop the appropriate wireless capabilities within the existing wire-line E9-1-1 networks. Most notably, inter-tandem (9-1-1 tandem) functionality was tested and is now being implemented in conjunction with the W E9-1-1 service. This will allow wireless data (ANI & ALI) to flow with transferred calls.

G.11 Are there meetings my PSAP can attend?

Yes. The State 9-1-1 Office conducts monthly W E9-1-1 planning meetings the second Friday of every month from 9 a.m. -12 noon at the Telecommunications Division Headquarters, 630 Sequoia Pacific Blvd. in Sacramento. A conference bridge (916-651-9095) is made available for those who cannot attend in person.

G.12 Whom do I contact for WE9-1-1 information in California?

At the State 9-1-1 Office, contact your respective 9-1-1 consultant or William (Bill) Harry at 916-657-9236 william.harry@dgs.ca.gov.

G.13 Where can I get more information on W E9-1-1?

The FCC website: www.fcc.gov/911/enhanced.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) website: <http://www.nena9-1-1.org>.

Project information is located on the California 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Office (“State 9-1-1 Office”) website at www.td.dgs.ca.gov/Services/911. For details pertaining to the wireless project, click on the link labeled “State of California Wireless E9-1-1 Project.”