



Thursday July 18, 2013

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL 9-1-1 PROGRAM LAUNCHES TEXT to 911 for VERIZON WIRELESS CUSTOMERS**

**DATELINE** - Verizon Wireless customers in Collin County, Texas (with the exception of the city of Plano, Garland, Richardson, and Wylie) can now send a short message service (SMS) text message to 911 for emergency help when unable to make a 911 voice call. This service will be available to any Verizon Wireless customer within range of a Collin County, Texas (with the exception of the city of Plano, Garland, Richardson, and Wylie) cell tower. Text to 911 is intended primarily for use in two emergency scenarios: for an individual who is hearing impaired and for a person who is unable to make a voice call, for example during a medical emergency that renders the person incapable of speech, or in the instance of a home invasion or abduction.

“Verizon Wireless and TeleCommunication Systems, Inc. (TCS) have been at the forefront of working with public safety stakeholders to bring text to 911 to our customers,” said Richard Craig, director of engineering for Verizon Wireless. “The SMS911 National Gateway enables us to bring reliable emergency communications to public safety answering points (PSAPs) across the country. We were proud to work alongside the North Central Texas Council of Government and TCS, to deploy this new solution.”

**Important information for Verizon Wireless customers in Collin County, Texas (with the exception of the city of Plano, the city of Richardson and the city of Wylie) Verizon Wireless customers in Collin County, Texas (with the exception of the city of Plano, Garland, Richardson, and Wylie) should keep the following in mind if they send a text to 911:**

- Customers should use the texting option only when calling 911 is not an option.
- Using a phone to call 911 is still the most efficient way to reach emergency help. Texting is not always instantaneous, which is critical during a life-threatening emergency. It may take slightly longer to dispatch emergency services in a text to 911 situations because of

the time involved: Someone must enter the text, the message must go over the network and the 911 telecommunicator must read the text and then text back.

- Using a phone to call 911 is still the most efficient way to reach emergency help. Texting is not always instantaneous, which is critical during a life-threatening emergency. It may take slightly longer to dispatch emergency services in a text to 911 situations in Collin County, Texas (with the exception of the city of Plano, Garland, Richardson, and Wylie) because of the time involved.
- Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative, since Allen Police Department, Collin County Sheriff's Department, Frisco Police Department, McKinney Police Department, Murphy Police Department, Prosper Police Department and Sachse Police Department Communications Centers will receive only an approximate location of the cell phone, and will not be able to speak with the person sending the text. Text abbreviations or slang should never be used so that the intent of the dialogue can be as clear as possible.
- Customers must be in range of cell towers in Collin County, Texas (with the exception of the city of Plano, Garland, Richardson, and Wylie) area. If customers are outside or near the edge of the county, the message may not reach the Allen Police Department, Collin County Sheriff's Department, Frisco Police Department, McKinney Police Department, Murphy Police Department, Prosper Police Department or Sachse Police Department Emergency Communications Center.
- Texts sent to 911 have the same 160-character limit as other text messages.
- Verizon Wireless customers who use Usage Controls should remove this feature to ensure full text to 911 capabilities.
- Verizon Wireless customers must have mobile phones that are capable of sending text messages. The solution is available for customers who use the native SMS provided by Verizon Wireless. Customers should consult their over-the-top (OTT) messaging provider to determine if and how text-to-911 is provided by the OTT application.
- The texting function should only be used for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire or emergency medical services. For non-emergency situations, customers should contact their local public safety agency via a 10 digit non-emergency number.

- SMS911 should only be used to communicate between emergency help and the texter with no pictures, video, other attachments or other recipients appended to the message.

### **About the SMS Solution**

The Verizon Wireless SMS911 National Gateway has three text to 911 delivery options: a web browser solution known as GEM911™ for PSAPs (public safety answering points) with Internet access and web browser capability; a Direct IP solution for next-generation IP-enabled PSAPs with call-taker workstations that have integrated text handling software; and an SMS to TTY solution for legacy PSAPs.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments Regional 9-1-1 Program Public Safety Points, Allen Police Department, Collin County Sheriff's Department, Frisco Police Department, McKinney Police Department, Murphy Police Department, Prosper Police Department and Sachse Police Department Communications Centers joins the ranks of many PSAPs to use the SMS911 gateway; a significant step in making text to 911 available more broadly. The deployment follows the recent announcement earlier this year from Verizon Wireless and TCS (NASDAQ: TSYS) that they are making a national text to 911 solution available.