

WHITE PAPER: On-Site Situational Awareness

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The appropriate 9-1-1 responses in an enterprise environment are often confused with the level of detail that is reported to the 9-1-1 call taker. Different individuals need different information based on their role and responsibility during an emergency event. Understanding those roles and responsibilities is the first level of crafting an appropriate emergency response plan for the enterprise.

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When emergency events occur within the commercial enterprise environment, quick and immediate action needs to take place to maximize the efficiency of public-safety first responders. Remember, these people are visitors to your building similar to any other guest. Unless previous on-site, training has been coordinated, they are helpless in your facility, especially during an emergent situation.

Doors will be locked, and access control will prohibit the "free roaming" of individuals without proper authorization and credentials, just as it would any visitor within your facility.

Take a hotel environment; a guest in room 525 starts feeling chest pains and dials 9-1-1 from their room phone. When the emergency call is answered, the guest is able to communicate the hotel name, address, and even room number to the call-taker. Emergency medical first responders are dispatched to the location, with all pertinent information about the location.

When the ambulance arrives at the hotel, medical personnel rush inside, past the front desk, and directly to room 525. Once there, they are met by a locked door, and no response to urgent knocking.

Rushing back downstairs, they return to the room with a hotel employee who provides access. Unfortunately, it's too late as the guest is now deceased.

A screen pop notifies the manager that an emergency call has just been placed from room 525.

Let us take that same scenario, but this time we will provide local situational awareness through on-site notification.

Again, the fateful guest in room 525 experiences chest pains. Dialing 9-1-1 from the room phone, the guest is immediately connected to the local public-safety answering point (PSAP). Simultaneously, an alert is triggered at the main desk in the lobby; a screen pop notifies the manager on duty that an emergency call has just been placed from room 525.

A call is placed to the room, where the manager confirms the call to 9-1-1. A room key for emergency services to utilize is prepared, and an elevator is held at the lobby level for the arrival of first responders.

When the ambulance arrives, medical personal are provided the appropriate access, and the guest is transported to the hospital in a lifesaving, timely manner.

When we dissect the technology used to provide this advanced level of emergency support, we find that not only did we create a more efficient emergency response environment; we did so without expensive adjunct equipment on the private branch exchange (PBX), and minus complex, costly automatic number/location identification (ANI/ALI) solutions that require monthly operating expenses (OPEX) and management.

The solution delivered all information needed to each individual involved with the chain of care; the hotel manager was provided with room information from where the emergency call was placed. Armed with this, he was able to make contact with the room by phone, and confirm where first responders needed to be once arriving on-scene. The public-safety call taker had the information they required; a dispatchable address, which was in turn provided to public-safety first-responders. Had additional details been beneficial, detailed floor plans could have been printed then handed to first responders when they arrived on-scene. Detailed information could have been provided about elevators and stairwells, reducing internal

response time required to get to a specific area within the facility as well.

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Unfortunately, today's public-safety network only allows a multiple-line telephone system (MLTS)/PBX to pass caller ID as an ANI on a 9-1-1 call. That caller ID must align with a pre-existing ALI record in the public-safety database. In locations such as hotels, where we have fixed floor plans, sequentially numbered rooms, and a user population that does not relocate their device across the property, there is little value in providing a room number to the public-safety dispatcher via complex ANI / ALI records.

In fact, based on how 9-1-1 works in the public switched telephone network (PSTN), each individual room would have to have it's own unique PSTN telephone number in order to maintain a unique ANI/ALI database record. Even with today's modern telephone systems, although that is possible, it certainly is not feasible, or financially advantageous to hotel property-owners and managers.

Utilizing on-site notification with screen pop technology on PC consoles, wall monitors, and employee smart devices will ensure the right people are notified when an emergency event occurs, just as the lack of acknowledgment of an alert can be escalated accordingly to ensure a quick and immediate response.

Tim Kenyon, ENP is the President and CEO of Conveyant Systems, Inc., and a member of the National Emergency Number Association. The Conveyant SENTRY™ Emergency Location Management solution is part of the Avaya Select Product Program and provides on-site situational awareness and endpoint location correlation information to enterprise networks eliminating the need for complex and costly ANI/ALI based solutions provided by the ILEC..