

PRESS RELEASE

PICKAWAY BECOMES ONE OF OHIO'S FIRST 25 COUNTIES TO OFFER TEXT-TO 911 BEGINNING DECEMBER 28TH, 2020

RELEASE DATE: December 21, 2020

Pickaway County, Ohio – Pickaway County is now offering Text to 9-1-1 for residents to report emergencies for those who cannot safely call 9-1-1 in a dangerous situation, or for those who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability. Dialing 9-1-1 in an emergency is still the preferred way to request help, and the public is reminded to **“Call if you can, text if you can’t.”** For most people, sending a text to 9-1-1 will not replace making a call. Appropriate scenarios for texting 9-1-1 could include:

- Deaf, hard of hearing callers or individuals with a speech disability.
- The caller is unable to speak due to a medical issue or other condition.
- When speaking out loud would put the caller in danger, such as a home invasion, an abduction, a domestic violence incident or an active-shooter scenario.

In a joint statement, the Pickaway County Commissioners, Pickaway County Sheriff Robert Radcliff, and Pickaway County 911 Coordinator Darrin Flick stated, *“Text to 9-1-1 provides another layer of service that will greatly enhance safety for the public. Text messaging is one of the primary ways that people communicate today, and the 9-1-1 community is constantly striving to meet the evolving needs of the public and right now, that means implementing text to 9-1-1 solutions. Recent major critical incidents across of the country have shown that text messaging has increasingly been used as an effective form of communication to report an emergency, so we are pleased to be able to now offer this service to our residents.”*

Tips on texting 9-1-1 in an emergency:

- Be sure to include clear information about the location (including city) of the emergency with the type of help needed (police, fire, or medical) in the first text message sent to 911. Emergency personnel cannot always determine your location.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.
- Text in simple words – do not use abbreviations, emoticons or emoji or send videos or photos.
- Keep text messages brief and concise.
- Stay on the line until the dispatcher closes the dialog if it is safe to do so.
- You cannot include 9-1-1 in a group text or while roaming.
- Do not forget to silence your phone if you do not want to be heard.
- Do not text and drive

Text to 9-1-1 does have limitations, as it only works in cities that provide the service and a 9-1-1 text may take longer than a voice call because someone must enter the text, send it through the system, and then the 9-1-1 dispatcher must enter a text response and send it back. Just like regular text messages, 9-1-1 texts can take longer to receive, get out of order, or may not be received. Residents of other cities are advised to check with their local authorities if Text to 9-1-1 is available in their respective cities as not every city has implemented this technology yet.

For more information about Text to 9-1-1 services in Pickaway County, please visit <https://pickawayema.org/text-to-911> or contact Lt Jon Rhoades at (740) 477-2176 / Darrin Flick at (740) 477-1165.