SMS Text-To-911 Implementation Package

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Prepared for	Kansas Statewide NG911 System PSAPs

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1   Executive Summary

As the implementation of Simple Message Service Text-to-911 (Text-to-911) on the Kansas NG911 Statewide System (System) nears, it is imperative that all participating PSAPs have the appropriate information, training and expectations for Text-to-911 to operate effectively and efficiently. This package provides information on:

- Kansas Coordinating Council (Council) policy position regarding acceptance of Text-to-911 by PSAPs
- Expectations for the implementation and delivery of Text-to-911
- Training plan for Text-to-911
- Sample policy for Text-to-911 for PSAPs
- Public relations information and guidance for notifying the media and citizenry of the participating PSAP jurisdictions.

2   Introduction

Simple Message Service Text-to-911 is a common form of communication used by millions of people worldwide. The Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) reported that "America's wireless networks carried over 1.9 trillion text messages – that's over 5 billion text messages every day – in 2015"[1]. Because our population commonly communicates via SMS text message, the expectation exists that they can communicate with 911 via the same medium. Implementation of SMS Text-to-911 makes this expectation a reality. Additionally, Text-to-911 offers a simple and readily available form of communication for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

3   Scope and Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance and relevant information to all PSAP personnel to prepare them for the implementation of Text-to-911 on the System. The document is limited to SMS Text-to-911 and does not address Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) text.

4   Applicable Documents

4.1   Federal Standards

- NENA

4.2   Kansas Coordinating Council Documents

- Kansas NG911 Position Paper on SMS Text-To-911
- Kansas NG911 Text-to-911 Policy
- Text-to-911 Press Release Sample
- NG911 Dispatcher Educational Brochure (9-16-2016)
- NG911 Public Educational Brochure

5   Council Policy Position on SMS Text-To-911

The Kansas 911 Coordinating Council issued a paper in September of 2016 outlining the Council's position that Text-To-911 is a wireless 911 call and as such that all Kansas PSAPs have a statutory duty to either provide or contract for the 24-hour receipt of SMS Text-To-911 messages for all wireless service areas within their jurisdictional boundaries. This is true regardless of whether a PSAP has elected to participate in the statewide call handling system or not. The entire position paper is attached to this document as Appendix A.

6   PSAP Expectations Regarding Text-to-911

As the first i3 service being implemented on the System, Text-To-911 may generate questions and concerns as to its implementation on the System. In an effort to set appropriate expectations and provide desired information to the PSAPs the following is offered.

6.1   Timeline

Several steps must be accomplished in implementing Text-To-911. These steps include establishing network connectivity to the Text Control Center (TCC), an upgrade of the hosts and the PSAP workstations to Vesta Release 6, SP1, configuration of the firewalls and hosts to deliver texts appropriately, and carrier testing with the PSAPs. The timeline for Text-To-911 is:

- Establish network connectivity with TCC – Completion date 05/12/2017
- Utilize Train-the-Trainer training to create video training for all users on the system – 09/06/2017 to 09/08/2017
- Training video released to PSAPs for training of all PSAP personnel – 09/11/2017 to 10/14/2017 (PSAPs connected to Wichita Host will need to have training completed prior to 10/15/2017)
- Install Vesta R6 SP1 upgrade on Host 1 and all Host 1 PSAPs – 09/18/2017 to 09/22/2017
- Install Vesta R6 SP1 upgrade on Host 2and all Host 2 PSAPs – 09/25/2017 to 09/29/2017
- Configuration for text of Host 1, routers and firewalls – 08/21/2017 to 09/01/2017
- Configuration of ECaTS text modules - 08/21/2017 to 09/01/2017
- Configuration for text of Host 2, routers and firewalls – 10/02/2017 to 10/13/2017
- Conduct Carrier testing with PSAPs – 10/16/2017 to 11/01/2017
- Launch public education campaign for all Participating PSAPs on the system as of 11/01/2017 – 11/02/2017 (PSAPs will be live with Text-to-911 at the conclusion of carrier testing in their PSAP. We will withhold announcement until all PSAPs on the system have been brought live and then announce system wide. This will give PSAPs the opportunity to test and train in a live environment until the public announcement)

6.2   Text-to-911 Expectations

The following expectations may be assumed by the PSAPs:

- A standardized call handling screen layout, containing Text-to-911 screen elements, will be pushed to the PSAPs during the host configuration process defined above. This screen layout may be altered by a Vesta administrator at the PSAP if the standardized layout is unacceptable

- Text messages will be delivered to a separate text queue, segregated from voice call queues
- Text-to-911 is not available when a person is roaming
- Text-to-911 can be transferred to other PSAPs on the System. When a text is transferred the receiving PSAP should receive the ALI and the content of the text conversation
- If a person tries to text to 911, within the PSAP boundary of a PSAP that is not text enabled, a bounce back message indicating that text is not available and that the person should make a voice call, will automatically be sent by the TCC
- PSAPs will initially be set up to take a maximum of five text conversations per seat in the PSAP
- Sample policy for handling of Text-to-911 is included in this document package
- SMS text is a text only form of communication. Any multimedia message sent to 911 will have the text portion of the message converted to SMS and only the text will be delivered to the PSAP. A system message will be appended to the bottom of the text portion of the message indicating that media is available and providing a phone number to call to arrange for delivery of the content if desired
- Wireless Phase II location information may be delivered with the text message or available on rebid
- Text message calls will plot to the Vesta Locate map in the same way that voice calls currently do
- ALI information will dump to CAD in the same manner of a voice call. The text content of the message will not and will have to be manually entered into the CAD record either in its entirety or summarized in accordance with PSAP policy
- Text content and call handling system parameters will be captured in ECaTS and will be retrievable through summary and call detail reports from the ECaTS system
- Recording of text messages to a logging recorder will not currently be allowed due to security concerns. As i3 logging event recording is vetted, tested and deemed to be secure, this type of recording will become available to the PSAPs on the system

7   Policy and Standard Operating Procedure for Text-to-911

Each PSAP is encouraged to adopt policy and standard operating procedures for handling of Text-to-911 messages. To assist the PSAPs in developing this policy and procedure, the Council has drafted a sample policy and procedure document. The sample policy template is attached to this document as Appendix B and is also available on the kansas911.org website.

8   Public Education Campaign

As previously stated, the public education campaign to inform the public of the availability of Text-to-911 will be held until all PSAPs on the System as of September 13, 2017, are live with Text-to-911. This will to some degree, prevent misunderstanding by the public as to where Text-to-911 is available and where it is not. Because not all PSAPs are on the statewide system, and in some cases, have elected not to join the system, this potential misunderstanding will continue to be an issue. In an effort to reduce this confusion, a status map of Text-to-911 implementation will be kept updated and available on the kansas911.org website. The map will not be available on the website until after November 1, 2017.

The public education campaign will consist of local print media press releases, television and radio public service announcements (PSAs), and brochures that may be reproduced and distributed by the PSAP. The Council is asking that each PSAP on the System actively participate in notifying their local print media outlets and distributing the brochures to their residents. PSAPs should begin their public education campaign on November 2, 2017. A sample press release and public education brochure are attached to this document as Appendix C and are also available on the kansas911.org website. The Council will create and gain television airtime for PSAs. Radio PSAs will be created and made available to PSAPs for delivery to their local radio stations. Additionally, the Council will attempt to gain television news coverage of the implementation of Text-to-911.

9   Conclusions

Implementation of Text-to-911 is the first i3 service addition to the System. The implementation has numerous moving parts and is a complex undertaking. It is the intent of the Council that the information provided in this document will help the PSAP to move forward with this implementation in an informed and coordinated manner. If you have questions regarding the implementation, please contact Lori Alexander (lori.alexander@kansas911.org) or Scott Ekberg (scott.ekberg@kansas911.org).

Kansas NG911
Position Paper on Text-To-911

Last revised   September 23, 2016

Prepared by   Scott Ekberg

Prepared for   Chief Dick Heitschmidt

10.1 Executive Summary

The Kansas 911 Coordinating Council (Council) is issuing this position paper to provide Kansas PSAPs with the Council's position on participation in Simple Message Service (SMS) Text-To-911. SMS Text-To-911 is one of the basic i3 services related to Next Generation 911 (NG911). The Kansas NG911 System (System) will incorporate SMS Text-To-911 as the first implemented i3 service. This addition is expected to be operational in early 2017.

The Council believes that SMS Text-To-911 messages are and should be viewed as wireless 911 calls. Because Kansas statutes require local units of government to provide or contract for the 24-hour receipt of wireless emergency calls, it is the opinion of the Council that every Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in the State of Kansas must receive SMS Text-To-911 as soon as possible. PSAPs participating in the System will be provided the ability to receive SMS Text-To-911 at no additional cost. PSAPs not participating will need to identify the method of receiving SMS Text-To-911 that they wish to deploy and will be responsible for any and all costs of that deployment.

10.2 Introduction

SMS Text-To-911 is one of the basic i3 services related to NG911. It provides citizens the ability to send SMS text messages to 911 and the PSAP the ability to respond to these messages. It is especially useful to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community or to caller's who cannot complete a voice call due to wireless service degradation or danger. Because the majority of SMS text messages will initiate from wireless devices and because they are requests for emergency assistance, the Council believes that SMS texts are and should be viewed as wireless 911 calls.

10.3 Statutory Requirement

K.S.A. 12-5380 requires that:

> **"The governing body of each city and county shall provide or contract for the 24-hour receipt of wireless emergency calls for all wireless service areas within the jurisdiction of the city or county."** (Emphasis added)

Given the nature of SMS Text-To-911 calls and the statutory mandate to provide answering of wireless emergency calls, it is apparent to the Council that participation in receiving SMS Text-To-911 is not optional, but is rather a statutory duty. It is therefore, the opinion of the Council that all Kansas PSAPs must either provide or contract for the 24-hour receipt of SMS Text-To-911 messages for all wireless service areas within their jurisdictional boundaries.

10.4 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Applicability

Title II of the ADA covers telephone emergency service providers and other State and local government entities and instrumentalities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all PSAPs to provide direct, equal access to their services for people with disabilities. There is a current pending lawsuit, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, which specifies that in Maricopa County, and the City of Surprise, a person who is deaf or hard of hearing cannot contact 911 via text and as a result is in many circumstances wholly unable to access 911 services that are "critically necessary and available to individuals without disabilities." **The failure to make 911 accessible to individuals with disabilities**

violates both Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 (emphasis added)**.**

10.5 Methods for Receiving SMS Text-To-911

There are three basic methods for receiving SMS Text-To-911. These methods are

- o   SMS Text-To-911 over TTY interface
- o   SMS Text-To-911 over dedicated website
- o   SMS Text-To-911 via direct connection to a Text Control Center (TCC)

The Kansas NG911 System will utilize direct connection to a TCC and will be provided to System participates at no additional cost. PSAPs that elect not to come onto the System will be responsible for implementing the SMS Text-To-911 solution of their choosing and will be responsible for any and all costs associated.

10.6 Waiver of Participation

The Council does not have the authority to mandate that a PSAP implement SMS Text-To-911. Any PSAP that chooses not to do so, that is participating on the Statewide System, will be asked to sign a waiver of participation. The waiver is attached as Appendix A to this document.

10.7 Conclusion and Recommendation

It is every PSAPs choice whether to implement SMS Text-To-911 or not. It is the intent of the Coordinating Council to provide clear and effective guidance to the PSAPs in making that decision. It is the Council's recommendation that all Kansas PSAPs implement SMS Text-To-911 as soon as possible.

10.8 Appendix A - Waiver of SMS Text-To-911 Capability

September 13, 2017

_____, as the administrative authority for the Public Safety Answering
        (Name)

Point operated by _____,
                        (PSAP Governmental Entity Name)

as a PSAP on the statewide call handling system, acknowledge and understand the following:

1. That SMS Text-To-911 will be available to our PSAP within sixty (180) days from the above date at no additional cost to our PSAP.

2. That the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council has informed us of their opinion that every Kansas PSAP should implement SMS Text-To-911 as soon as possible.

3. That not implementing SMS Text-To-911 may be a violation of K.S.A. 12-5380.

4. That not implementing SMS Text-To-911 may be a violation of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794.

Being fully aware and understanding of the above, _____,
                                                        (PSAP Name)

hereby elects not to implement SMS Text-To-911.

_____
(Signature)

_____
(Printed Name)

_____
(Title)

_____
(Date Signed)

Kansas NG911 Interim Text-to-911 Policy and Standard Operating Procedure for (your agency name goes here)

Effective Date   September 16, 2016
Last Revised   September 16, 2016

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Contents

1   Introduction

Next Generation 911 (NG911) is the future technology for processing emergency calls by texting. The ability to send a Short Message Service (SMS) Text-to-911 is just one of several upcoming key NG911 components. Having the ability to text 911 is very important for the hearing and speech impaired community. It is equally important for domestic violence advocates. The Kansas 911 Coordinating Council has developed the following policy in regards to texting 911. This policy serves as a basic interim policy on SMS text-to-911.

2   Policy

It shall be the policy of the (your agency name here) to follow the procedures set forth in this (written directive, policy, standard operating procedure) for the processing of calls received via Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging.

Text calls are accepted to provide the best service to the public when a voice call to 911 is not possible, such as due to a speech or hearing impairment or when the caller's physical safety would be in jeopardy by making a voice 911 call.

3   Procedure

In lieu of voice communications, callers may opt instead to contact the (your agency name here) via SMS Messaging, also called "**texting**".

Calls received via SMS Messaging will come into the Center on a designated queue labeled as "TXT-2-911".

If appropriate, when processing a SMS Messaging call, a Telecommunicator may place himself/herself as "**Not Ready/Busy**" on the phone system until the SMS Messaging call has been handled. (Agency policy in this regard may vary according to the to the Interim Text-to-911 solution adopted by the PSAP, staffing levels, etc.)

To initiate a two-way conversation, the Telecommunicator will answer the call coming in on that queue like any other 911 call. A window will appear allowing two-way conversation between the Telecommunicator and the caller.

If pre-set messages are available, the Telecommunicator may choose to use those messages as appropriate. (See Appendix A)

If it is determined that a field unit response is indicated, the Telecommunicator will generate the call in Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) using the (**New Event/Incident**) function, or fill out the appropriate card(s) if on a manual system. Initial information will be gathered in the following order:

1. The caller will be greeted with the same script that voice callers receive:
   Example: "Anywhere 911, where is your emergency?"

2. The Telecommunicator should ask the caller if they can call in by voice. (If it is safe to do so).

3. (Enter here your agency policy of verifying information that displays during a 911 call).

4. The nature of the call will be asked for and the appropriate call-types entered into the call. Once a call is classified it will be routed for dispatch to the appropriate unit(s).
(NOTE: Below are two examples from actual SOP documents of how EMD could be handled.)

    a) Medical calls will not be processed using the EMD protocol. These calls will only be assigned a Chief Complaint.
    b) The Telecommunicator will provide the same level of service in regard to Emergency Medical Dispatch for text calls as they do for voice calls. Telecommunicators will follow the same protocol they do for voice calls, by gathering the same information, dispatching the appropriate units and providing the same post-dispatch instructions.

    (Please insert your agency policy here.)

5. If the Telecommunicator doesn't understand the caller's question or response the Telecommunicator should seek clarification.

6. Telecommunicators will ensure that all scene-safety information is obtained to ensure that bystander and responder safety issues have been addressed.

7. All scene-safety and any other pertinent information will be recorded and relayed to the responders as appropriate. Before ending of the call, the Telecommunicator will inform the caller that the requested assistance is being sent to address that the caller initially requested. This will help confirm that the address of the incident is correct.
Example: "EMS will be dispatched to 505 W. Chapel Hill St (or as per your agency policy)".

Ending a call is accomplished by using the *Release* button (or however your agency ends a SMS call). (Note that agency policy in this regard may vary according to the Interim Text-to-911 solution adopted by the PSAP). Once a call is released, a message should be sent to the caller indicating that the session has ended. A SMS Messaging session cannot be restored/initiated by the 911 Center again unless the caller messages 911 again in a new session.

4   General

At no time will a Telecommunicator use 'texting' lingo, shortcuts, acronyms, or emoji's. All correspondence from the Telecommunicator will be in full-length form, with the exception of common acronyms, which include, but are not limited to:

-**St** for Street

- **Rd** for Road

- **Hwy** for Highway

-**EMS** for Emergency Medical Services
- **KS** for Kansas

- **US** for United States

- **I-xx** for Interstate Highways

Auto correct may change words the caller did not intend to type so clarification is only necessary if the meaning of the message cannot be determined. If a caller uses emoji's it sometimes comes in the form of skewed characters or symbols.

The caller should be encouraged not to use 'texting' lingo, shortcuts, acronyms, or emoji's so as to help eliminate any confusion on the part of both parties; however, callers are not required to oblige. In the event it becomes difficult to understand a caller's need due to the use of these shortcuts, the Telecommunicator will ask the caller if they can call in by voice.

If appropriate, the **Class of Service** source field should be changed to "TEXT" as a Text-to-911 call may not automatically populate correctly with the appropriate class of service (i.e. landline, wireless, etc.). This is done in order to facilitate searching for text-to-911 messages.

When appropriate, non-English text-to-911 messages should be handled in the same manner as voice calls (i.e. according to PSAP policy). If the Telecommunicator is unable to explain to the caller that they need to call 911, the Telecommunicator will initiate a voice call to the originating number and attempt contact.

A caller should not be called back in cases where their safety, or the safety of another, is in question; however, if a responder requests that a callback be made on a request for service that was initially received via SMS Messaging, the Telecommunicator will inform the officer of such. If the officer still requests a callback at that point, the callback request will be honored.

5   Language Translation

Presently language translation for Text-To-911 is limited. If such translation is available, it shall be utilized. If language translation is not available, the caller must be advised to make a voice call to 911 for an interpreter. If sufficient location information is available, consideration should be given to starting an initial response for any unknown emergency or open 911 call.

The following question has been added in the Spanish drop down list of the present questions:

5.1   ¿Cuál es su dirección de su emergencia?

6   Non-response from Texter

Response to this would depend upon the initial text that is received. If there is language within the message to indicate it might be a legitimate 911 text, then text message back "If you have an emergency, text or call 911". If there is still no response, (enter your agency's policy for hang-up or silent 911 calls).

If the language within the text is garbled and might indicate a "misdialed or accidental text" then text message back "If you have an emergency, text or call 911". If there is still no response (enter your agency's policy for hang-up or silent 911 calls).

7   Tracing Anonymous Text

Currently no anonymous text can be sent. However, if they are through another carrier, any traceable information provided should be handled as it would for voice calls. If there is no information, no action can be taken.

8   Multiple Text Handling

Multiple text sessions will be prioritized in the same manner as 911 calls. The highest priority Text-to- 911 call will be determined by the nature of the emergency. Make sure you respond to each message and ensure, if multiple texts are received about the same call, that they are indeed the same and not a different call.

Telecommunicators will need to make others in the room aware of multiple text sessions to ensure multiple calls are not entered.

9   Misdirected Text

If technically possible, transfer to the proper agency. If not technically possible, take pertinent information and relay to proper agency. Maintain contact with the complainant and handle as appropriate for call type. Release the complainant when appropriate for situation according to policy or when unit(s) is on-scene. The Telecommunicator may have to provide contact information for the proper agency on end of session or when appropriate. (See Other Considerations (section four) for more detail).

10 Text for Non-emergency

(Enter here your agency policy for non-emergency call processing.)

11 Priority Voice vs Text

Calls shall be prioritized based on the nature of the call, whether voice or text.

12 Tracking Moving Text-to-911 Callers

(Note – this section will require modification according the interim text-to-911 solution used by the PSAP.)

Depending on the Text-to-911 solution adopted by the PSAP, the Telecommunicator shall use the rebid feature to obtain a current location of the caller. If the caller leaves the agency jurisdiction, the Telecommunicator will transfer the text session to the agency responsible for that jurisdiction, only if they are capable of receiving text sessions. If the receiving agency does not have the capability of receiving text, the original Telecommunicator will maintain the session and relay information to the appropriate agency. If the text session enters another jurisdiction, then the incident will be passed onto that agency, either by transferring the session or by relaying all information by voice.

If there is a session in progress, it will need to be passed on to any relieving personnel.

13 Shift Change

The passing on of text sessions at shift change between operators must include information related to the open sessions. All queues are to be checked at shift change.

14 Retention of SMS Messages

The content of all SMS Messages to/from the 911 Center are public record and are available upon request of any citizen or media. All communication from the 911 Center shall be of a professional nature and work-related.

The retention of all SMS Messaging will be in accordance with the current *(enter in your agency's policy for the retention of records).*

15 Testing

Monthly tests shall be completed by each employee. Testing should consist of answering a call with the help of a partner and asking several questions. Transferring to another agency is recommend in order to become more familiar with the process. Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring testing is completed by their team members.

16 Policy Enforcement

Failure of an employee to comply with any of the provisions set forth in this policy may result in disciplinary action. The 911 Director reserves the right to alter this policy at any time. Employees will be notified of any updates to this policy including the effective date of any changes.

17   Appendix C – Sample Press Release and Public Education Brochure

PRESS RELEASE: (Current Date)   Contact

For Immediate Release   (Agency Contact)
                                                                                        (Agency Name)
                                                                                        (Agency Phone)
                                                                                        (Agency Fax)

RE: (Agency PSAP) to start accepting Text-to-911 Calls

On (Date), The (Agency/PSAP) County Emergency Communications Center in conjunction with the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council will hold a press conference to announce the availability of Text-to-911 during an emergency. Text-to-911 service will be available for those individuals who cannot safely make a voice call to 911 in an emergency. This will be a valuable service to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Testing for Text-to-911 has been completed in (Agency/PSAP) County and is available with plans from AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, & Verizon Wireless (Include local carriers). Text-to-911 may not be available outside of (Agency/PSAP) County. If a text is made to 911 where that service is not available, a message will be sent back to the phone advising the customer to make a voice call.

Some situations when Text-to-911 is appropriate:
- Deaf, hard of hearing callers, or individuals with a speech disability
- A caller who is unable to speak due to a medical or other condition
- Emergency situations that would put the caller in danger if making a voice call
- Examples include abduction, domestic violence or active shooter situation

    When texting to 911, follow these guidelines
- Provide your exact address or location
- Explain the type of emergency or help that is being requested
- Be prepared to answer any questions that the 911 telecommunicator texts back.
- Use plain language; do not use abbreviations, symbols, emoticons, or photos.
- Messages should be brief and concise

Texting 911 can be done by typing "911" in the field for a phone number. No other numbers need to be used. Texting should be done through your wireless phones text messaging service and not from a third party texting applications. Text-to-911 does require an active telephone service plan with data or it will not work.

Remember, the best way to contact 911 is by making a voice call. Please only utilize this service in emergency circumstances where a voice call is not possible or safe.

The (Agency/PSAP) and the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council are excited to offer Text-to-911 service to the citizens of (Your) County.

Remember: CALL if You Can, TEXT if You Can't!

###

18 Appendix D – Public Education Pamphlet

The public education pamphlet is shown on the following page. It is available for download at http://www.kansas911.org.

TEXT-TO-911

911 Call if you can **Text** if you can't.

Text-to-911

COMING SOON

Text-to-911 is the ability to send SMS text messages to your local 911 call center during an emergency. Text-to-911 should *ONLY* be used in an emergency and in circumstances when you cannot safely call 911.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

- Your phone plan must have a data or text plan to be able to use this service.
- Text in simple words—no slang or abbreviations.
- Messages must be in English at this time if possible, translation for text is not currently available.
- You must provide your location and nature of assistance needed—police, fire or medical.

- You cannot send group messages to 911.
- No pictures, videos, emoticons or emoji's can be accepted at this time.
- Do not end you text call or power off your phone unless the dispatcher advises. 911 centers cannot initiate text messages.
- If text-to-911 has not been implemented in the jurisdiction in which you are located, you will receive a bounce back message advising to place a voice call.

911 CALL IF YOU CAN TEXT IF YOU CAN'T