

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 21, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Text to 9-1-1**

On Monday, March 25, 2019, you will be briefed on Text to 9-1-1 by Major Israel Herrera of the Dallas Police Department and Deputy Chief George Gamez of Dallas Fire-Rescue. Text to 9-1-1 is a new service enhancement and will provide citizens an alternative method to contact 9-1-1 when calling is not possible. Wireless customers will be able to send a text (up to 140 characters) to 9-1-1 with their police or fire emergencies. It is stressed that calling 9-1-1 is always the fastest and preferred method as there are limitations when texting to 9-1-1. After the briefing, a public announcement will be made to introduce Text to 9-1-1 to the citizens of Dallas.

The briefing materials are attached for your review.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Fortune".

Jon Fortune  
Assistant City Manager

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manger  
Chris Caso, City Attorney (Interim)  
Carol A. Smith, City Auditor (Interim)  
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant City Manager and Chief Resilience Officer  
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
Laila Alequresh, Chief Innovation Officer  
Directors and Assistant Directors

# City of Dallas Text to 9-1-1

Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee

March 25, 2019

Major Israel Herrera  
Dallas Police Department  
Deputy Chief George Gamez  
Dallas Fire Rescue



# Presentation Overview

- Background/History
- Purpose
- Limitations
- Operations
- Next Steps



# Background/History

- Prior to November 2017 COD Communications Vesta system did not have the capability for Text to 9-1-1
- Vesta System was upgraded in December 2017 to Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1 and now has the capability to process text requests for 9-1-1

# Text to 911 Purpose

- Service Enhancement by offering our citizens an alternate avenue to contact 911 if they are not able to dial.
  - Example
    - Caller is deaf
    - Caller is hard-of-hearing
    - Caller has a speech impairment
    - When speaking out loud would put the caller in danger

# How it Works

## Call Takers Screen

The screenshot shows a software interface for call takers. At the top, there is a 'Queue Display' section with tabs for Media, Queue, Calls, Agents, Ready, and Longest Wait Time. Below this is a 'Text Conversations' section. A blue header bar displays '(214) 585-6666' and 'Abandoned' with a 'Close' button. The main area shows a conversation log: a caller message 'Help' received at 1:28:35 PM, and an automated message 'Dallas 911 Where's your emergency?' sent at 1:28:35 PM. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Initial', 'General', 'Law', 'Suspect', 'Fire', and 'EMS'.

## Preformatted Responses

The screenshot shows a software interface for preformatted responses. The top section is titled 'Text Conversations' and contains the text 'No text calls are present in this window.' Below this is a scrollable list of preformatted prompts: '9-1-1, what is the address of your emergency?', 'What city?', 'What is the closest intersection?', 'What is your emergency?', 'Do you need police, fire, or ambulance?', 'What is your phone number?', 'What is your name?', and 'What is the problem?'. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Initial', 'General', 'Law', 'Suspect', 'Fire', and 'EMS', with 'Initial' currently selected.



# Limitations with Text to 911

- As with all text messages
  - Texts to 9-1-1 may take longer to receive
  - May be received out of sequence
  - May not be received at all based on provider coverage
- If a citizen texting to 9-1-1 does not receive a text response from a call-taker, the citizen should try to connect to 9-1-1 using another method (Phone or TDD/TTY)
- Text to 9-1-1 cannot include more than one person (No Group Texting)
- Settings that support Text to 9-1-1 to respond must be enabled
  - Example: “Location Services” must be turned on to receive accurate caller location

# Limitations with Text to 911

- Settings that prevent Text to 9-1-1 from responding must be disabled
  - Example
    - Do Not Disturb
    - Do Not Disturb While Driving
    - Airplane Mode
    - Any other setting that disables texting
- 9-1-1 is unable to receive photos or videos
- 9-1-1 is only able to receive texts in English
- As the program evolves processing other languages may be possible.
- Text to 9-1-1 is for emergencies only. 3-1-1 request should be made by traditional means.

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# Operations

- Through collaboration with CIS, DPD and DFR, 9-1-1 call takers and Fire Dispatch employees have been trained how to process Texts to 9-1-1
- Soft launch of Text to 9-1-1 began in December 2018.

## Operations: Text Processing AVG.

- **Texts to 9-1-1**

- **December**

- Total Sessions – 865
- Avg Session Duration – 630.4 seconds - 10.50 mins

- **January**

- Total Sessions – 203
- Avg Session Duration – 663.4 seconds - 11.05 mins

- **February**

- Total Sessions – 146
- Avg Session Duration – 651 seconds - 10.85 mins

# Operations

- San Antonio 2018 Text to 9-1-1
  - 2,857 requests handled through text(s)
- Average Session Duration (handle/process time)
  - 1489.6 seconds = 24.82 minutes

# Next Steps

- Public Release and Education on Text to 9-1-1 on April 8, 2019.
- Continued monitoring and training on Text to 9-1-1
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE79SCsJYPE&feature=youtu.be>

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