



TUSCALOOSA COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

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Communications / Addressing / Mapping

Rod Coleman, Director

Text-to-911 Now Active in Tuscaloosa County

On October 6, 2020, public safety in Tuscaloosa County took a major step forward in accessibility to 9-1-1. With a commitment to better utilization of emerging technologies and a strong, coordinated approach to public safety, Tuscaloosa County joins 9-1-1 centers across the nation in the use of text messaging as another means through which those in need can contact 9-1-1 centers and vice versa.

All agencies in the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Operations Center will have the ability to not only accept inbound messaging (allowing the public to directly access 9-1-1 through text messaging from their wireless handset) but may also conduct outbound messaging (sending text messages to the public).

The agencies in the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Operations Center consist of Tuscaloosa County 9-1-1, Tuscaloosa Police Department, Tuscaloosa Fire Rescue, Northport Police Department, Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office, University of Alabama Police Department and Northstar EMS.

Text-to-911 will be especially useful for the hearing or speech impaired and extremely useful in those situations where it is not safe to place a voice call to 9-1-1. Tuscaloosa County 9-1-1 encourages citizens with police, fire or medical emergencies to call 9-1-1 if they can and text 9-1-1 only if they cannot.

Tuscaloosa County's 911 system is now configured to receive text message requests for 911 services, and communications personnel are trained to receive emergency calls and text messages from their workstations.

When texting 9-1-1, the initial message should be short and include the approximate location of the emergency. The next step is to answer the questions from the 9-1-1 calltaker and follow the instructions given by the calltaker.

The application being used for the Text-to-911 service is called Texty which was designed and supported by Indigital of Fort Wayne, IN in conjunction with the Alabama 9-1-1 Board. Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, SouthernLINC, and Sprint have voluntarily committed that they will provide text-to-911 service through this platform.