



## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT CAN NOW RECEIVE WIRELESS 911 CALLS FROM CELL PHONES***

LINCOLN, CA, April 20, 2009 -- As a part of the Lincoln Police Department's Communications Center upgrade project, police dispatch staff can now receive wireless 911 calls from cell phones dialed in Lincoln. The upgrade was completed early this year and includes large 52" monitors, GPS mapping of each police vehicle, and a number of other hi-tech features including a Wide Area Rapid Notification system to alert residents about critical information impacting their safety.

The number of 911 calls placed by individuals using wireless phones is rapidly increasing. It is estimated that about 50 percent of all 911 calls received are placed from wireless phones. While wireless phones are important, they create unique challenges for public safety. The primary challenge is the fact that wireless phones are mobile and do not operate from a fixed location or an address that can be associated to the phone.

Previously, the Lincoln Police Department communications center automatically received caller information from residential and commercial landline phones only. This information consists of subscriber name, address, and phone number. When a caller called 911 from a cell phone in Lincoln, the call was answered by the California Highway Patrol. Once the caller was determined to be inside our city limits, the caller would be transferred to our communications center.

With the Wireless 911 system implemented, if a caller is within -- or very close to our city limits -- the call is answered directly by the Lincoln communications center. This is accomplished by identifying the caller's location through triangulation between cell towers or GPS, depending on the carrier. A major benefit of identifying the caller's location is that our communications center is able to automatically see the caller's location on a map. The latitude/longitude of the caller is received by our system and

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translated into a visual notation which is displayed on each of our four dispatch consoles and on a wide screen monitoring system in the communications center.

This system allows Lincoln Police personnel to send assistance in a much faster manner. Since the calls are no longer answered by CHP, the department has been able to dramatically reduce the time from the initial 911 call to when help arrives. It also allows police personnel to quickly get a physical location on the caller. In the example where a caller dials 911, but is unable to speak, police officers will be able to respond to the area and search for the caller. Depending on a number of factors (distance to towers, obstructions, cell carrier, type of phone, etc.), the industry standard of the caller's location accuracy is within 150 meters 95% of the time and 50 meters 65% of the time.

### **Tips for Calling 911**

- Tell the emergency operator the location of the emergency right away.
- Give the emergency operator your wireless phone number so that, if the call gets disconnected, the operator can call you back.
- If your wireless phone is not "initialized" (meaning you do not have a contract for service with a wireless service provider), and your emergency call gets disconnected, you must call the emergency operator back because the operator does not have your telephone number and cannot contact you.
- Even if your phone is not "initialized", with most phones, you can still dial 911 and reach an emergency operator. This is especially important to remember when allowing children to play with old cell phones. A large number of accidental wireless 911 calls come from uninitialized phones where children dial 911. If you no longer use the phone and are going to allow your children to play with it, remove the battery first.
- To help public safety personnel allocate emergency resources, use the appropriate phone number for reporting non life-threatening incidents. In the City of Lincoln, this phone number is 916-645-4040.
- Refrain from programming your phone to automatically dial 911 when one button, such as the "9" key, is pressed. Unintentional wireless 911 calls, which often occur when auto-dial keys are inadvertently pressed, cause problems for emergency call centers.



- If your wireless phone came pre-programmed with the auto-dial 911 feature already turned on, turn off this feature. Check your user manual to find out how.
- Lock your keypad when you're not using your wireless phone. This action also prevents accidental calls to 911.





