

Happy New Year

Happy 2019! Wishing the best to you and your PSAPs throughout this year.

New Website

The newly revamped MCSA website is now up and running here:

www.ma911.org

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook:

Twitter: @MCSAMA911

<https://www.facebook.com/MCSAMA911/>

Monthly Meeting

January 16, 2019

10:00-12:00

Essex Regional

18 Manning Avenue

Middleton, MA 01949

February 20, 2019

10:00-13:00

South Worcester County
Communications Center

357 Main Street

Worcester, MA 01570



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First Issue of the MCSA Newsletter

Happy New Year and welcome to the premiere issue of the Massachusetts Communications Supervisors Association (MCSA) Newsletter. The newest, revamped version of our website is now up and running, and this newsletter will be published in monthly installments covering various topics of interest.

In the future, our hopes are this newsletter will provide information related to upcoming events and MCSA meetings, promote training and educational opportunities throughout the state, offer opinion and/or informational articles relevant to Massachusetts Public Safety Communications Centers, and assist in maintaining our commitment to providing all public safety professionals with the support they need in their protection of life and property, to the extent of their training and ability.

Join us to become involved and make a difference:

<http://ma911.org/join-us>



Any questions about this newsletter on any topics covered? Have a story or topic idea for a future issue?

Contact us today:

outreach@ma911.org

48th Public Safety Communications Academy

Applications now being accepted by the State 911 Department for the PSCA to be held February 11 to March 15, 2019 at the Middleborough Training Facility. For more info, please contact Cathy Rodriguez at 508-821-7217 or via e-mail at cathy.rodriguez@mass.gov.

Text-to-911 Refresher Course

An online Text-to-911 Refresher Course (approved for 2 hours of in-house CDEs) is offered by the State 911 Department here:

www.mass.gov/info-details/text-to-9-1-1-online-refresher

Test Your Knowledge:

True/False: Does the Silent Monitor feature work with Text-to-911?

(Answer will be posted in the February issue!)

Text-to-911: Commonwealth Debut

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts launched statewide Text-to-911 on Friday, December 14, 2018, making this a service available to all residents and visitors of the Commonwealth with access to a functioning mobile phone with Short Message Service (SMS) capabilities. Text-to-911 should be utilized only during an emergency when an individual in need of services is unable to place a voice call via 911. At this time, State 911 upholds that “Making a voice call is the most efficient way to get access to emergency services” (State 911 December Newsletter). The State 911 Department will be rolling out a public education initiative regarding Text-to-911 in the near future.

Location

Texts to 911 are routed to PSAPs based on location information that is provided by the subscriber’s carrier. Since texts do not adhere to the same Federal Communication Commission (FCC) standards as voice 911 calls, “there is no mandate on location accuracy for text” (State 911 December Newsletter), and the location that will be displayed with a text received on the Next Gen 911 system will be a “coarse location.”

Coarse locations are essentially latitude and longitude which identify a center point the texter *may* be in. Keep in mind coarse location is not an exact location.



Additionally, coarse locations are not WPH2 (Phase 2) locations and may not be as accurate as WPH2 locations. It is possible a coarse location could indicate a very large area, which will result in a large probable location circle on the 911 call taker’s NG911 map. In this case, it is possible that your PSAP could receive a text from a nearby jurisdiction.

Limitations

Presently, there are a few limitations when utilizing Text-to-911. If your PSAP receives a text that is out of your jurisdiction, the 911 call taker that answers the text will need to gather all pertinent information (phone number, location, type of emergency, etc.) for the call. The call taker will then relay that information to the correct jurisdiction, as there is no existing way to transfer a text session. Furthermore, there is no way to control any of the location data provided by the carrier – however, call takers can perform a

“Retransmit” any time after a text is connected in an attempt to improve the location found on the screen (as you would with a voice 911 call).

A few other limitations exist with the Text-to-911 program at this time: 1) Multimedia (pictures, videos, emojis) cannot be received by 911 call takers. 2) Text messages addressed to more than one recipient cannot be received by 911. 3) Text-to-911 does not have the capabilities to support group messaging or group text messages. 4) Messages exceeding 160 characters may be fragmented and sent and/or received out of order.

Any further questions about Text-to-911 can be directed to Monna Wallace via monna.wallace@mass.gov.

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Massachusetts Communications

Supervisors Association

“Developing Dispatchers & Dispatch Centers”

A Message from the President Regarding Retirement Legislation

With the start of 2019, we begin a new legislative session on Beacon Hill and restart our efforts to reclassify certified emergency telecommunications across the Commonwealth into Group 2 of the public retirement system. With the closing of 2018 and the 190th General Court SB.1479 & HB.1449 failed to come out of the Senate Ways & Means Committee and were never brought forth to a hearing. That is not for a lack of effort or support from any of you or this Association. These bills saw the largest amount of support from legislators ever seen by any of our previous attempts.

I need not tell any of you the reasons as to why public safety telecommunicators should be reclassified into group 2 or even try to explain the physical, emotional, and potential long term psychological impacts this profession has on all of us. We live it each and every day and our families also feel the impacts. What I can tell you is that MESA is already working with legislators on Beacon Hill to refile these critical pieces of legislation and continue to move forward with this fight.

With the start of the 191st General Court and new legislative session, it is a critical time in the process and we need your support. We need every certified telecommunicator in the Commonwealth to reach out to their elected representatives on Beacon Hill, both in the Senate and House of Representatives and make your voices heard. Ask them to sign on a co-sponsors of “An Act Relative to Massachusetts Certified Emergency Telecommunicators” which is being offered in the House of Representative by longtime MESA friend and supporter Rep. Todd Smola of the 1st Hampden District. Educate them on what it is that you do on daily basis and how the job of an emergency telecommunicator has changed and your duties and responsibilities have grown. Let them know the split-second decisions that you make on a daily basis save the lives of people in the communities they represent as well as the public safety personnel that they count on to save lives. Explain to your representative why this bill is critical to you and your work co-workers. Lastly, inform them of the direct impacts that the passage of this legislation will have on you personally and the impacts that this profession has taken on you and directly or indirectly your families. Your personal stories are what will have an impact so share them with those who you have elected to represent you!

Lastly, I would ask that you help to spread the word... Talk to your Directors, Chiefs, local elected officials, and family members. Ask them to also reach out to their elected officials on Beacon Hill and advocate on behalf of this Legislation. The louder our voices and the more phone calls, letters and face to face visits happen the stronger our movement becomes. This legislation isn't about politics... it isn't about Democrat or Republican... It is about supporting 911 Telecommunicators who save lives on a daily basis and deserve recognition as PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS!