Milwaukee County Exec. Crowley: Announces launch of long awaited text-to-911 service

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Service allows County residents to text 911 in case of an emergency

MILWAUKEE, WI – Milwaukee County is joining a growing number of areas across the country in launching a Text-to-911 service that allows County residents to text 911 for help in case of an emergency. The new service allows Milwaukee County residents near County cell phone towers to text 911 emergency service if they are unable to make a voice call.

"This is a fantastic day for Milwaukee County as we launch an important emergency service that we've wanted to bring to the community for quite some time. This service increases the equitability of our public safety resources by leveling the field of accessibility for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind individuals to access 911 services at any time," said County Executive David Crowley. "In addition, text-to-911 provides another tool to increase public safety for individuals in situations where they cannot call due to poor reception or in situations where it is too dangerous to make a call. When it comes to 911 emergency services, residents should call if they can and text if they can't."

To text 911, residents should enter the numbers "911" into the "To" field and compose a short, simply worded text message in the text message field, just like a normal text message, using no abbreviations or jargon. The first brief message should describe the location of emergency and the type of help needed. After sending the first message, users should be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 call taker. Dispatches do not have the ability to get picture or video through the text message service at this time, however the

department anticipates next generation 911 technology arriving soon will enable 911 call centers to receive photos and video in the future

"Calling 911 remains the quickest and most efficient method to share information about an emergency, but the texting technology allows another option for individuals to contact emergency services in the event they cannot call," said Office of Emergency Management Director Cassandra Libal. "Our number one goal is keeping residents healthy and safe, so we're excited to provide another tool to meet the needs of County residents."

The text-to-911 program is a technology-based service that uses cell tower information to determine where a text is being sent from. This means when using text-to-911 cell phones will connect to the closest cell tower and the cell tower location is sent to 911. Because the Text-To-911 program is a county service, messages to 911 sent through a non-county cell phone tower will bounce back and not be submitted to 911 emergency services.

[Learn more about Milwaukee County Text-To-911 program online.](#)