NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 FAQ

What is Next Generation 9-1-1?

Next Generation 9-1-1 or NG9-1-1 is an internet-protocol based, digital network which will replace the current analog system for 9-1-1. The current 9-1-1 system was designed decades ago with landlines in mind. Today, we know the majority of 9-1-1 calls E-Comm receives are made on cellphones. The modernization of the 9-1-1 system through Next Generation technology will be taking place in phases across the country.

What are the benefits of Next Generation 9-1-1?

The transition to NG9-1-1 lays the foundation for safer, faster, more informed emergency response. In the future, NG9-1-1 will allow for capabilities such as real-time texting to 9-1-1, sharing of photos and video, as well as enhanced location details through GPS and geographic information systems or GIS to ensure help gets to where it's needed as quickly as possible.

With NG9-1-1, what will happen when I call 9-1-1?

You will still be able to call 9-1-1 on your phone for help anytime and connect with a skilled call taker who will get you the assistance you need. In the future, the digital network will allow for the ability to do more when reporting an emergency, such as text with 9-1-1, or send photos or video.

When will I be able to text 9-1-1, or send photos or videos?

Texting with 9-1-1 or sending in photos or video during an emergency situation is a future capability of the Next Generation 9-1-1 system. The timing will be largely dependent on further direction by federal regulators (the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC) on a national rollout.

Why is the change to Next Generation 9-1-1 happening?

The transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 has been mandated by the federal government to modernize our aging emergency communications infrastructure. The CRTC has set a deadline of March 31, 2027, for the national transition. E-Comm's implementation of NG9-1-1 is on track to take place well ahead of that time.

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What is E-Comm's role in relation to Next Generation 9-1-1?

As the largest public safety answering point in the province, E-Comm is overseeing the implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 on behalf of the regional districts it serves, along with its police and fire call-taking and dispatch partners. E-Comm is also helping to transition other partner agencies including the BC RCMP and BC Emergency Health Services. The size and scope of E-Comm's NG9-1-1 implementation project likely makes it one of the biggest and most complex in Canada, if not North America.

How many agencies or communities are are part of E-Comm's Next Generation 9-1-1 project?

E-Comm will be implementing Next Generation 9-1-1 for 25 Regional Districts and 70 police and fire departments in the province. E-Comm will also be helping to transition other key partner agencies, such as the BC RCMP, BC Emergency Health Services, and Saanich Fire. While E-Comm's project encompasses most agencies in B.C., others will be implementing NG9-1-1 on their own timeline.

How is Next Generation 9-1-1 implementation being funded in B.C.?

In March 2023, the Province provided E-Comm with $90 million towards the initial implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1, resulting in a significant savings for local governments and agency partners. E-Comm is proud to have played a leadership role in helping to facilitate this key contribution. An additional $60 million in provincial funding went to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for implementation associated with emergency communication centres, including for police and fire agencies who do not contract with E-Comm for their dispatch services or who are not part of E-Comm's NG9-1-1 program.

What measures are in place to safeguard the Next Generation 9-1-1 network?

With the introduction of NG9-1-1, the complexity of the technology involved in the 9-1-1 system will significantly change. The NG9-1-1 system is designed with multiple layers of redundancy to minimize the impact of any potential disruptions. E-Comm is placing significant emphasis on robust Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity, and technology resiliency measures to ensure uninterrupted emergency services.