

SOUTHERN IDAHO REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER



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For Immediate Release

In a cooperative effort, Southern Idaho Regional Communications Center (SIRCOMM) is pleased to announce the successful implementation of text to 9-1-1 with the Blaine County Emergency Communications and the City of Twin Falls Communications Center. After thorough testing, the ability to send a text message to 9-1-1 in Blaine, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, and Twin Falls Counties is now available.

Cell phone users in the following counties now have the ability to contact 911 via text messaging;

Blaine
Gooding
Jerome
Lincoln
Twin Falls

Text to 911 is intended primarily for use in two emergency scenarios:

- 1) For an individual who is hearing/speech impaired
- 2) For a person who is unable to make a voice call. For example, during a medical emergency that renders a person incapable of speech, or in the instance of a home invasion.

“Insuring that the residents of Southern Idaho and the Wood River Valley receive emergency assistance in the timeliest manner possible is our primary mission.” The benefit to those that are speech/hearing impaired is tremendous. The ability to communicate with 911 via text messaging during an emergency is another tool that we are able to provide the citizens.

SIRCOMM, Blaine County Emergency Communications and the City of Twin Falls Communications Center have spent the last six months preparing for this release. The effort of the staff and administration of the 911 centers is to be commended on being able to implement this resource. A lot of testing and procedure work has been completed to ensure that this new tool will work and be useful during an emergency.

SIRCOMM would like to remind the citizens to keep the following in mind if they send a text message to 911:

- Citizens should use the texting option only when calling 911 is not an option. Placing a voice 911 call is still the most efficient way to reach emergency help. Texting is not always immediate, which is critical during a life-threatening emergency. It may take longer to dispatch a first responder for help as messages have to be typed, sent, received and read.
- Location information via text to 911 is not as accurate as a voice to 911 calls. Therefore, you must make sure that the 911 dispatcher knows your location.
- Text to 911 currently works in the following counties; Blaine, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln and Twin Falls. If you are outside of one of these counties you may or may not have text to 911 services. If you do not have text to 911 services you will receive a message back from your carrier instructing you to place a voice call to 911.
- The text to 911 function should only be used for emergency situations that require immediate response from, law enforcement, fire or emergency medical services. Non-emergency services should still be communicated to your local 911 through their non-emergency line.
- Text to 911 should only be used to communicate between emergency help and the texter. You cannot send pictures, videos or other attachments or other recipients at this time.

9-1-1 Call if you can Text if you must

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