



Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network

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Dear City Secretary:

Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network administers the 9-1-1 system for the 48 cities and unincorporated area of Harris and Fort Bend Counties. The Network has recently implemented an educational awareness campaign to educate the public on 9-1-1 issues surrounding voice over internet protocol (VoIP) phone service.

We need your help! Please share this information with City Mayors and/or Managers:

Consumers are trading in their traditional phone service for Internet telephone service due to low costs and unlimited calling packages. Unfortunately, many of these citizens of your community do not know the following limitations of this type of phone service as it applies to 9-1-1 emergency calling:

- 9-1-1 service may not be offered at all and may need to be activated if available.
- Even when activated, emergency calls will not go directly into the 9-1-1 system, but to non priority-administrative lines in the dispatch call center.
- 9-1-1 call takers may not know the caller's location or call back number.
- If the power is out, VoIP telephone service may also be out.
- If a VoIP adapter is used in a location outside of the home, 9-1-1 may not work.

The Network urges you to assist us in educating your citizens on this issue that could possibly save lives and property. You can provide a valuable resource to your citizens by posting a link to our informational website www.911voip.org on your city and public safety websites.

You can also assist by working with your local utilities to include this tip card as bill inserts providing valuable tips for calling 9-1-1 from a VoIP phone. If you are interested in this option or in distributing educational tip cards at community events, please contact our office at (713) 625-9911. We would be glad to coordinate delivery of materials and or artwork for utility bills. Other ideas for spreading the message are: city newsletters and municipal channels.

As technology advances, the 9-1-1 and public safety industry struggles to keep up. Technical solutions for VoIP 9-1-1 issues are currently being developed. However, until they are implemented, public education is our only tool to combat the limitations of this system. Thank you for your support of this critical consumer awareness message:

"VoIP Phone: Know How it Affects Your Call to 9-1-1!"