



# Ottawa County Central Dispatch Authority

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## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CALL IF YOU CAN - TEXT IF YOU CAN'T**

Press Release Date: February 10, 2017

Topic: OTTAWA COUNTY CENTRAL DISPATCH IS FULLY OPERATIONAL WITH TEXT TO 9-1-1

Effective this date Ottawa County Central Dispatch now has the ability to receive emergency TEXT TO 9-1-1 calls. This covers all of Ottawa County and the entire City of Holland including the portion located in Allegan County.

Following industry recommendations; in an emergency, Voice Calls to 9-1-1 are preferred allowing dispatch personnel to have the ability to locate the caller in the event they cannot provide their location. If the person involved in an emergency cannot talk (for whatever reason) Ottawa County Central Dispatch can receive a Text 9-1-1 call and assist the person requiring aid.

This new service can be of tremendous value to persons with hearing disabilities or for people in an emergency situation such as domestic violence, a robbery, or a home break in where talking on the phone could further endanger the caller.

People in Ottawa County and the entire City of Holland who are involved in a situation requiring emergency assistance can simply Text 9-1-1 to contact a dispatcher. The call will be handled similar to a traditional voice 9-1-1 call.

There are some significant things people need to know about Text TO 9-1-1.

1. **DO NOT TEXT AND DRIVE**
2. A dialed voice call to 9-1-1 is the best way to contact dispatch. TEXT TO 9-1-1 should be reserved for times when voice contact is not possible or unsafe.
3. Smart911 Safety Profiles are displayed with TEXT TO 9-1-1.
4. TEXT TO 9-1-1 is dependent upon the cellular phone carrier tower location, service availability, and signal strength. If the TEXT TO 9-1-1 is not available for whatever reason the person placing the text will receive a 'bounce back message' stating Text to 9-1-1 is not available and instructs the person to dial 9-1-1.
5. TEXT TO 9-1-1 uses **SMS** (Short Message System) of cellular phone carriers and is limited to 256 characters.

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"Providing excellence in 9-1-1 communications"



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6. TEXT TO 9-1-1 cannot receive photographs, pictures, or video. Sending pictures etc. utilizes **MMS** (Multimedia Messaging Service) of cellular phone carriers. **TEXT TO 9-1-1 does not support MMS.**
7. Attempting to place a TEXT TO 9-1-1 and adding another person in the same message will not work. Multiple persons in the same text changes the format from SMS to MMS and dispatch will not receive the message.
8. Do not abbreviate – use full, simple words
9. **DO NOT TEXT AND DRIVE!**

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