

## Text-to-911: Where is it?

We are well into the 21st century and we have seen incredibly rapid advancements in technology in all areas of life, including technology specifically designed to assist people with a hearing loss to more comfortably and efficiently function in a hearing world. For example, with today's technological advancements a person with a hearing loss can:

- wear a bluetooth enabled hearing aid which can block out background noises and have a direct link to the speaker wearing a bluetooth enabled microphone,
- go to a movie theatre and watch the latest blockbuster and understand the dialogue by using a variety of captioning devices,
- remotely communicate with family, friends and business associates using a videophone or a captioned phone.



**Virginia L. Moore**  
**Executive Director**

One doesn't have to look very far these days to find someone communicating with the outside world using seemingly universal mobile devices. Anyone with a mobile device can communicate with others across the globe via voice, email, chat apps, videophones and text messaging.

Text messaging seems to be, by far, the most popular means of communication today as it is a very quick and simple means of communication. Text messaging could easily be a lifesaver for someone facing a crisis or an emergency of some kind. For example, one could have their car break down late at night and with their mobile device they could quickly get help from someone. Unfortunately however, most areas of our society today lack one extremely important service that should seemingly be very easy to implement in order to save countless lives everywhere. That service would be called text-to-911 and it is not yet widely available nor is it really as simple as it may sound to implement. This service would enable anyone facing dire situation to text message directly to emergency responders for immediate help. As it stands today, most people who cannot hear on the phone would have to first text someone else asking them to use a phone to contact the emergency responders for them. This adds extra steps and more time to a time-critical situation which could lead to disastrous results. As of April 2015, text-to-911 is sadly only available in two counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

As of June 30, 2015, the FCC has mandated that wireless carriers and other text messaging providers must be capable of providing text-to-911 services. However, the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP also known as 911 call center) is not required to receive text messages. The FCC has strongly encouraged the centers to be able to receive text messages as soon as possible or as soon as they are able to update their equipment to receive text messages. To understand the delay with the centers, one must understand how they are established, administered and maintained. The Commonwealth of Kentucky is not managed by a single collective 911 center, rather they are managed by several 911 call centers positioned within each county of the Commonwealth. The management of 911 centers are handled by local state or county government. In order for the 911 centers to receive text, they would need to update their system. This update can be very costly and most centers have limited budgets and are only able to maintain personnel and their current system.

The ideal and most effective updated system would not only be able to receive text messages, but the system would also be able to detect the location of the person

*(Continued on page 2)*

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*(Continued from front page)*

who sent the text message. This is called Enhanced Next Generation 911 (NG911) and it is extremely vital because it would save a lot of time in time-critical situations. Ultimately this is the system that the call centers are currently striving to obtain.

Currently, if you send a text-to-911 before it is available in your area, you will receive a bounceback message letting you know that you need to contact 911 in a different manner.

Basically, the bottom line is that although the technology is currently available, funding for each independent 911 center is not. To help this process along each of us can contact our legislators and ask that they support your local 911 center in order to ensure rapid deployment of this much needed service. Though text-to-911 is currently unavailable to most of us today, these are exciting times because the authorities have promised us that these services will soon be available to all and that will offer peace of mind to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

## April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month



Driver distraction is the leading cause of most crashes according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Almost 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involve some kind of distraction within three seconds of happening. During 2013, Kentucky experienced over 52,500 crashes leading to more than 9,000 injuries and 163 fatalities due to distracted driving.

*Three main types of distractions:*

- ❶ Visual — taking your eyes off the road  
(texting, reading, looking at others or pets, etc.)
- ❷ Manual— taking your hands off the wheel  
texting, adjusting radio, signing with passengers, etc.)
- ❸ Cognitive— taking your mind off what you're doing  
(texting, talking on phone, talking/signing to others, etc.)

While all distractions are dangerous and can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves each of these types of distraction.

If you still aren't convinced that texting and driving is a bad idea, you should take into consideration that Kentucky House Bill 415 which was signed into law on April 15, 2010 bans texting for drivers of all ages while the vehicle is in motion. If you are caught texting while driving you will receive a ticket and a monetary fine.

There are many apps available to help keep you safe while you are driving by sending a message to individuals who contact you letting them know you are driving and will contact them shortly. Check out this link to see a list of these apps and consider downloading and using one!

<http://goo.gl/yIRLxE>

# Are you prepared?

Spring is in the air but along with the much anticipated season comes the threat of severe weather.

Did you know that lightning is one of the top three storm-related killers in the United States? In the U.S. lightning kills 51 people and injures hundreds more each year. Other associated dangers of thunderstorms include tornadoes, strong winds, hail and flash flooding.

Tornadoes, nature's most violent storms, can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in mere seconds. Every state is at some risk from tornadoes and Kentucky being partially in the infamous Tornado Alley is at an even higher risk.

Flash floods can happen quickly within minutes or hours of excessive rainfall and are responsible for more fatalities annually than any other thunderstorm-associated hazard.

FEMA reports that approximately 70% of individuals are not prepared for severe weather. Don't be one of them! With proper education and preparation you can protect you and your family from severe weather threats. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) to learn how to prepare for severe weather.



## Check out our new Facebook page!

Have you liked our new KCDHH Facebook page yet?

Due to technical issues we could not resolve we had to create a new page and we are still waiting for everyone to like us again.

Be sure like the NEW page since we will not be adding any information to the old one and you don't want to miss anything!

Be sure to tell your friends to like us too!!

### OUR NEW PAGE LOOKS LIKE THIS-



[www.facebook.com/KCDHH](http://www.facebook.com/KCDHH)



*Coffee Chat*

New *Coffee Chat* videos have been posted to our website!! Be sure to check them out to learn about upcoming national conferences that will take place in Kentucky this Fall!!

[www.kcdhh.ky.gov](http://www.kcdhh.ky.gov)



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