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## Public Service Announcement

Beginning July 11, 2016, the St. Joseph County 9-1-1 Dispatch Center began accepting Text to 9-1-1 messages. This system is to be used for emergencies ONLY.

We continue to stress **“9-1-1 Call if you can, Text if you can’t.”**

The text to 9-1-1 was initiated to better assist those residents with speech or hearing impairments to be able to easily contact 9-1-1 in cases of emergencies.

This texting feature is also being used to allow people in distress to make contact if it is not safe or if they are unable to speak, and need to contact 9-1-1.

There are however some limitations to this texting system. Only Short Messaging Service (SMS) messages can be utilized. This means that 9-1-1 center are unable to receive photos or videos at this time.

Texting to 9-1-1 can take longer for the call-takers to process for several reasons;

- Text information is not equal to current location technology.
- Text messages can take longer to receive, get out-of-order, or may not be received at all.
- Text to 9-1-1 is not available if you are roaming.
- A text or data plan is required to place a text to 9-1-1.
- If text to 9-1-1 is not available, you will receive a message that 9-1-1 is not available and to contact 9-1-1 by other means.
- Cannot include more than one person, do not send emergency messages to another person.
- Do Not Text and Drive!
- Texting sends very limited information about the caller, therefore the caller’s name, home address, telephone number, current location, and the nature of the emergency all must be verified during the text messaging. This can take much longer to process and obtain this information than a voice call.

Now that texting to 9-1-1 is operational, we ask people NOT to start testing to see if it works from their phones. You can be confident that rigorous testing has been done on the system to ensure the proper operation of Texting to 9-1-1. Currently Sprint, Verizon and AT&T customers are able to text to 9-1-1, T-Mobile is planning on joining the system shortly.

St. Joseph County 9-1-1 Dispatch Center is eager to serve all of St. Joseph County residents and with the addition of Text to 9-1-1, we are staying abreast of ever evolving technology. So remember...

**9-1-1, Call if you can,  
Text if you can’t.**

**Thank you  
Dennis Brandenburg, Director St. Joseph County 9-1-1**