

# Enhanced 911

A product overview for HR, facilities and legal teams

Protecting your employees and visitors in the event of an emergency is crucial in a changing landscape – and now that companies are relying more than ever on remote workers and shared office spaces, emergency solutions must adapt to changing environments or risk threats to both their people and operations.

Technology has advanced, and people are no longer dialing 9-1-1 solely from landlines and traditional office phones. Additionally, callers in emergencies are increasingly more mobile, and modern office buildings also pose a unique challenge for emergency services. That's where Enhanced 911, or E911, shines.

E911 is a lifesaving innovation. This brief provides a quick summary of the E911 regulations with which organizations must comply – Kari's Law and the RAY BAUM'S Act. Also, read about the four main compliance concerns for E911 deadlines.

## What is E911?

E911 is a service that enables 911 to work in the modern enterprise and lies at the heart of compliance with the laws we'll discuss. Whether a person is in the office, at home or on the road, E911 technology finds the caller's exact location. Additional industry emergency response innovations include routing that location information directly to the appropriate emergency dispatcher and immediately notifying the appropriate security personnel within the caller's network.

On August 1, 2019, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted a Report and Order that created rules that affected businesses and organizations of all types and sizes, including enterprises using a multi-line telephone system (MLTS). This Report and Order was then enacted into federal law on January 6, 2020, and includes two key components: Kari's Law and Section 506 of the RAY BAUM'S Act. Each has specific rules, requirements and compliance deadlines.



# Kari's Law & RAY BAUM'S Act: A Quick Summary

## Direct dialing

Businesses are now obligated to ensure their communication systems do not in any way hinder a person from dialing 9-1-1. A person must be able to pick up a phone, dial 9-1-1 and get through to a dispatcher.

## Notification

When a person dials 9-1-1 from an enterprise communication system, whether on- or off-premises, relevant personnel (the front desk, security team, etc.) must be notified. However, a notification of an emergency call without context is meaningless. That's why Kari's Law also requires the notification to include the caller's location and the phone number that dialed 9-1-1. For a communication system to be able to do this, the help of E911 technology is necessary.

## Dispatchable location

If a person dials 9-1-1 from within your enterprise communications system – even if off-premises – your business or organization is responsible for ensuring the caller's dispatchable location is automatically sent to the nearest Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), which is the location of emergency dispatch services. This location information must be sufficient to effectively locate the caller within the environment from which they are dialing. This means the dispatchable location may differ depending on the environment.

For example, if a person dials 9-1-1 from a small café, an adequate dispatchable location may simply be: 123 S. Main St.

If a person dials 9-1-1 from an office in a 20-floor building, the dispatchable location might look more like: 456 W. Chicago Ave., Floor 17, Suite 1702, Office A.

## Four concerns around E911 compliance

### 1. Employee safety

Employers should think about compliance in terms of fulfilling their duty of care to those in their trust, whether they are employees, visitors or remote workers. While companies have always had to consider their duty of care to employees, it has become an increasingly public matter.

With company-issued mobile devices and the fact that modern employees are constantly tethered to work, a business's duty of care reaches far beyond the physical office and traditional 9-5 hours. In fact, mobility and flexibility in the workplace necessitate a thorough exploration into what fulfills the company's duty of care to its modern worker. Chief among these is an employee's access to emergency services, regardless of where or when they may be working.

What happens when one of your employees experiences an emergency and dials 9-1-1 using a phone connected to your company network? It does not matter if that person is dialing from the 16th floor of a high-rise behind a closed office door, their home office or the wi-fi shop down the street – that employee needs to receive help in the most efficient and effective manner.

In addition to the mounting social expectation to have emergency plans in place, don't forget that it is also the law. Both Kari's Law and the RAY BAUM'S Act mean duty of care is no longer simply a good idea but rather an issue of compliance with federal legislation for all businesses in the United States. However, the good news is that being 100% compliant not only puts your company in good legal standing but also demonstrates a duty of care to employees by providing them with complete E911 coverage in a dispersed work environment.

## 2. Civil lawsuit fines

In the coming year and beyond, organizations may face decisions about how much they are willing to invest in emergency preparedness and E911 compliance.

It has become clear through consultations with lawyers, IT teams and business executives that the decision is highly subjective and differs across organizations. It is up to the individual leaders within each organization to decide how much technology they are willing to introduce.

When choosing the right solution for the enterprise, leaders must understand that while less may be a viable option now, compliance enforcement will be driven by the first high-profile lawsuit. After considering the costs of a civil case, executives will heed recommendations and invest in proper solutions rather than “good enough” options.

Those who have been proactive about emergency preparedness will not have to worry about costly quick fixes to bring their organization into compliance. Also, being proactive often goes hand in hand with proper fulfillment of the duty of care to employees, thereby lowering the enterprise's risk exposure.

## 3. Brand reputation of civil lawsuit

Being at the center of a legal case involving the neglect of employee safety could be highly detrimental to how a business is perceived, both by customers and potential employees. In fact, being part of a civil lawsuit brought for non-compliance with E911 legislation could erode your brand reputation.

Current customers and future clients may be less inclined to do business with an organization that has come under fire for being out of compliance with safety standards.

Additionally, companies that take safety standards seriously understand that attracting and retaining top talent requires providing them with an excellent environment in which to thrive. Compliance with E911 regulations must be considered when determining how best to present your brand and ensure maximum employee safety.

## 4. FCC fines

Finally, non-compliance with E911 rules and regulations could result in a fine of up to \$10,000, plus \$500/day for each day of non-compliance. Luckily, with the right E911 solution, it's easy to achieve 100% compliance across both pieces of legislation.

## A step-by-step approach toward compliance

When assessing your 911 architecture, make sure to consider compliance with federal E911 legislation.

Kari's Law and the RAY BAUM'S Act both have deadlines that have now passed. This may require enhancing your current E911 solutions and beginning a project toward E911 compliance.

Starting these projects now keeps your team safe, and not only brings you into compliance with current E911 legislation, but also better prepares you for inevitable future regulations.

To make your assessment easier, refer to this E911 Made Easy Checklist. It provides a simple step-by-step approach to ensuring your compliance with federal E911 legislation and fulfilling your duty of care to employees.

# E911 Made Easy Checklist

## STEP 1: Kari's Law requirements: direct dialing to 911 and 911 notifications

- Identify all call servers in your enterprise.
- Program all call servers to dial 9-1-1 without any additional prefixes.
- Provision notifications that will be sent to security and/or enterprise personnel at the time of any 911 call.
  - This notification should provide detailed identification and location information.

## STEP 2: The RAY BAUM'S Act requirements: providing a dispatchable location for all devices connected to the enterprise network

### Buildings

Creating a full enterprise map of your buildings and/or rural locations is a key component of an emergency plan.

- Work with your facilities team to label all buildings, floors and rooms with a common naming convention.
- Work with the security team to make sure appropriate emergency entrances are properly identified.
  - Emergency response should be able to determine the caller's location without any additional instructions (e.g., 123 S. Main Street, Chicago, IL 60601, 4th Floor, NW Corner, Room 102).
- If you have rural locations, you'll need to provide latitude and longitude coordinates.

### Devices

If a device (or a softphone application on a device) can dial 9-1-1, it should be included in your inventory.

- Identify all static devices on your enterprise network.
- Identify all nomadic devices on your enterprise network.

### Network discovery

Now that you have inventoried all devices, you will want to think about network discovery. How will these devices be discovered?

- Decide whether to group certain phones into a single location; e.g., a bullpen of six phones might be one location, but a single room with a door might be one location.
  - This notification should provide detailed identification and location information.

**Additional note:** Some state regulations require location down to the desktop level for all devices. The FCC notes that the state regulation in this case will supersede the federal. Please check with your counsel to understand the existing E911 regulations in the states where you do business.

## STEP 3: Once you've completed your inventory, you might have some questions regarding your choice of network discovery based on your call server(s) or network requirements.

- Contact your preferred reseller who can help you evaluate how to integrate an E911 solution into your enterprise.
- Contact us if you would like to schedule a call to prepare a complimentary custom solution design for your organization.