

9-1-1 Center Is Your Link To Vital Community Emergency Services!

What would you do if your house was on fire and you couldn't call the Fire Department? Or, if you or someone in your family stopped breathing and no one could call an ambulance from your telephone? You need to be able to call 911.



One of the essential elements of a reliable Phone Service is its ability to fully utilize the 911 emergency system when you need it. Unfortunately, some new Voice Over Internet Providers Phone Services do not provide vital 911 service.

On the other hand some VoIP providers, like Time Warner Cable's Digital Phone Service offer full-fledged Enhanced 911 (E911) service. This enhance 911 system automatically displays the caller's name, phone number, and location on a computer screen in the 911 communications center when they call, making emergency response much easier.

It is important for you to know which phone companies can connect you to 911 in an emergency. We have investigated these concerns about some VoIP services on your behalf. This brochure was designed to help you when making an informed decision when considering switching to a new VoIP service.

This brochure and the information provided within has been printed for you by your Emergency Communications Department.

In cooperation with the
City of Rochester



And the
County of Monroe



The 911 Center, the City of Rochester and the County of Monroe will not accept any responsibility or liability for any problems encountered surrounding your inability to access 911 during an emergency should you choose to subscribe to a Telephone service that does not support 911 or E911 service.

The Emergency Communications Department



Your 9-1-1 Center

*VoIP Service and
what it means to you...*

Voice-Over Internet Providers

A number of companies are marketing a new telephone service to consumers. It is referred to by a number of names such as Internet telephone service, voice over IP, or VoIP. Instead of using the conventional telephone service and lines, it communicates through the internet or a broadband connection.



The advantages to the consumer include a generally lower cost than conventional telephone service, greater mobility, additional features, and the ability to send both voice and data over a single system. Yet some VoIP services have limited 911 services which may outweigh those benefits.

Will I Be Able To Call 911?

Some of the companies we have contacted will not provide their customers with emergency access to 911. With such companies, you will not be able to dial 911 for any reason; the telephone will just not make that connection. Frontier and Time Warner Cable both have enhanced 911 service which provides additional information to the 911 call center. Some companies without 9-1-1 capabilities are requiring their customers to acknowledge this in writing.

Automatic Location Indicators

Some telephone services, such as those available from Frontier and Time Warner Cable provide the 911 Center with the address and telephone number of the caller. Some VoIP companies are not providing this information. This could cause a delay in response which may result in a loss of life or unnecessary damage to your property if the caller is unable to give the 911 operator their correct location.

The Difference Between 911 & E911?

With regular 911 you have to clearly tell the dispatcher your location and phone number which can take valuable time in an emergency. Also if for some reason your call is disconnected before you've finished relaying your information, emergency services will not know where you are. E911 is one of the many standard features that come with some phone services. Ask your company if you get this feature automatically with your service.

Will My Alarm Work With VoIP?

If you have a burglar or fire alarm system that dials a monitoring station you may find that the some VoIP telephone services are not compatible with your alarm system. In these circumstances, your alarm when activated, may not reach the monitoring station or your emergency services provider. Time Warner Cable's Digital Phone Service will work with most monitored security systems.



What Happens When My Power Goes Out?

Please note that most VoIP providers do not include back-up power and, as is the case with a cordless phone, should there be a power outage, phone service will not be available, including the ability to access 911 services, until the power is restored. A cellular phone provides sufficient backup during temporary power outages.

Using My VoIP In Multiple Locales

One of the functions of some VoIP service is the ability to take the telephone from one location and use it in another location that has a broadband connection. However, if a call is dialed to 911 from this new location, the call could be routed to the wrong 911 facility, resulting in a significant delay or a complete lack of emergency services.

Read Before You Sign!

We strongly urge consumers in the Greater Rochester and Monroe County community to consider these factors when deciding whether to subscribe to a VoIP service. Ask the company about the items we have listed. Use the Internet to investigate this situation thoroughly before signing on with any one of them. Read your contract completely before you sign it.

Important Questions to Ask When You Consider Switching:

- Will I be able to dial 911?
- Do you provide enhanced 911? . . .
- Will my 911 calls get routed directly to the Emergency Center? . .
- Will my address information be presented to the Emergency Center?

Consider the Facts ... The Life You Save May Be Your Own!