

Enhanced 911 Legislation in Pennsylvania

What Your Organization Needs to Know to Be Compliant



Background

Did you know that the level of 911 protection millions of Americans have in their homes is far better than what they receive at their nearby office, campus, hospital, or government building?

This is because the phone systems of many large facilities, such as office buildings, healthcare institutions, colleges, and universities transmit only the main billing phone number to the 911 answering point – not the 911 caller’s exact phone number. By providing only the main billing number, the 911 answering point can only derive the main billing address of where the 911 caller is located. In many cases the main billing phone number and main billing address are not enough for emergency personnel to find the 911 caller. The ability to pinpoint a caller’s exact location is known as enhanced 911 (E911).

In situations where a caller’s precise whereabouts could not be determined, emergency response teams have been unable to help until it was too late. Several 911-related wrongful death cases have gone to trial, and juries have not been sympathetic to organizations that didn’t take precautionary measures to protect the people on their premises.

Changes in Legislation Are Sweeping the Country Regarding Enhanced 911 Services

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) have led the charge to encourage legislators to create more strict E911 regulations and protection. Many states have implemented laws requiring organizations to be responsible for taking measures in support of E911. As an example, non-compliant businesses in Illinois and Minnesota could face thousands of dollars in fines for neglecting to carry out E911 safety measures.

Why E911?

It will soon be the law in Pennsylvania.

Owners of multi-line telephone systems (PBXs) will have to use E911 so that emergency callers can be located.

Safety is key.

Keeping employees, students, visitors, and the reputation of your facility safe is a priority for any campus or business. E911 is an extension of this objective.

Liability and fines can be avoided.

Failure to provide E911 protection could result in regulatory fines and expose your organization to large damages from civil and criminal litigation. Viewed in the context of a potential liability, the cost of deploying an E911 system is much easier to justify. Also, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) may consider failing to adopt E911 as evidence that an institution did not maintain a hazard-free workplace for employees. That could also result in regulatory fines.

Pennsylvania's E911 Legislation (Pending)

Pennsylvania has pending legislation that specifically addresses the issue of PBX phone systems and 911 call handling. House Bill 224 amended the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act [P.L. 340, NO 78] requiring automatic location identification and automatic number identification on multi-line telephone systems. Per the new bill, "Location information shall be specific and include, but not be limited to, the following details:

- (i) Floor name or number.
- (ii) Room name or number.
- (iii) Building name or number.
- (iv) Cubical name or number.
- (v) Office name or number."

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How Amcom Software Can Help You Achieve E911 Compliance

As a solution provider, Amcom Software can help educate you about this critical issue, as well as provide you with a range of solutions for E911 compliance.

Contact us at: 800.852.8935

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