

Alberta

9-1-1

Standards

Version 3.0

Appendices A-D to Ministerial Order No. PSES 2-2022

DECEMBER 1, 2022



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1.0 Alberta 9-1-1 Standards

1.1 History

The Alberta 9-1-1 Standards (also referred to as “Standards”) were developed through collaboration between representatives of Alberta 9-1-1 stakeholders and the Alberta 9-1-1 Program. The Alberta 9-1-1 Standards were ratified by Alberta 9-1-1 centres, known as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), and the Alberta E9-1-1 Advisory Association (AEAA). The Standards were first approved on June 12, 2018. Version 2.0 of the Standards was approved January 27, 2021. Version 3.0 was approved and brought into force by Ministerial Order No. PSES 2-2022 on December 1, 2022

1.2 Updating Alberta 9-1-1 Standards

The Alberta 9-1-1 Standards will be regularly reviewed and updated as required.

- a) At any time, parties may submit proposed changes for the Alberta 9-1-1 Standards to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program.
- b) Prior to the Alberta 9-1-1 Standards update, the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will solicit representatives from the AEAA, non-member PSAPs, and industry representatives as appropriate, to form a standards review committee to review suggestions and recommend changes.
- c) Once the committee finalizes recommended Alberta 9-1-1 Standards changes, the recommended changes will be distributed to all PSAPs in Alberta and reviewed at the following AEAA meeting.
- d) Any recommendations received after the review period is closed will be tabled until the next review period, unless deemed urgent or time sensitive by the Alberta 9-1-1 Program. In this case, an interim review would be initiated based on the process in Section 1.2 (b) and (c).
- e) After review at the AEAA meeting, the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will seek approval of the Standards from the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

1.3 Coming into Force

The Alberta 9-1-1 Standards take effect when the Ministerial Order is signed by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services. After the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services has approved the Standards, PSAPs will have one year to comply with any new or amended sections, unless otherwise specified.

1.4 Terminology

Below are definitions/terminology used throughout the document:

- a) 9-1-1: A three-digit telephone number to facilitate the reporting of an emergency requiring response by a public safety agency.
- b) 9-1-1 Prefix Call: Any 9-1-1 call generated by an unregistered wireless phone or wireless phone registered with an out-of-country area code. These phones have invalid ANI information and the default in the system is that they show up with a “9-1-1” prefix in the number.
- c) 9-1-1 Services: Provided by a PSAP in response to a 9-1-1 call, related to the management of the call, but does not include the dispatch of emergency services.
- d) 9-1-1 System Outage: When the 9-1-1 network is unable to receive calls from callers attempting to contact 9-1-1, or when PSAPs are unable to receive calls from callers attempting to contact 9-1-1. In some instances, TELUS notifies a PSAP of an outage through its client advocacy team.
- e) Abandoned Call: A call placed to 9-1-1 in which the caller disconnects before the PSAP answers the call. ANI/ALI feed may or may not come through.
- f) Alberta 9-1-1 Program: A unit within the Alberta Government that administers 9-1-1 grants, and works in collaboration with Alberta PSAPs to develop and ensure compliance with Alberta 9-1-1 standards.
- g) Automatic Location Identification (ALI): TELUS’ Provincial 9-1-1 Network’s capability to automatically identify the location of the telephone being used by the caller and to provide a display of the location at the PSAP.
- h) Automatic Number Identification (ANI): TELUS’ Provincial 9-1-1 Network’s capability to automatically identify the calling telephone number and to provide a display of the number at the PSAP.
- i) Call Back: The capability to re-contact the calling party.
- j) Connected: When a PSAP is able to directly answer and transfer 9-1-1 calls over the 9-1-1 network.
- k) Emergency Call: A call (phone, text, or other sources) for emergency services which requires immediate action. This may include situations as determined locally. Non-emergency calls do not meet the above criteria.
- l) Evacuation Facility: A second physical PSAP location to which staff would evacuate and operate from in situations when the main PSAP is unsafe or unable to continue daily operations. Evacuation Facilities must meet the requirements of section 4.6 of the Standards.
- m) Frivolous/Vexatious Call: Any deliberately made non-emergency 9-1-1 call

that could potentially occupy public safety resources unnecessarily.

- n) Hang-up: ANI/ALI information is delivered; connection was established and something may have been heard or said before the call was prematurely ended.
- o) Interoperable: The capability for disparate systems to communicate with one another.
- p) Main PSAP: A communication centre from which staff perform regular operations.
- q) Major Components: Any technology that directly supports a PSAPs ability to answer 9-1-1 calls of all types, capture caller and location information, and transfer 9-1-1 calls
- r) Non-Emergency Calls: A telephone request where non-emergency services are required. May depend on local situation/circumstances.
- s) Open Line Call: A 9-1-1 call where there is no two-way communication between the caller and the Telecommunicator (this could include an accidental “pocket dial” or a situation in which the caller is not able to speak freely).
- t) Primary or Secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP): A communication centre which receives 9-1-1 calls from a defined geographic area and processes those calls according to a specific operational policy.
 - i. Primary PSAP: A communication centre connected to the 9-1-1 network to which 9-1-1 calls are routed directly from a telecommunication provider. Primary PSAPs provide direct 9-1-1 service to the public before the call is transferred to a Secondary PSAP, if required.
 - ii. Secondary PSAP: A communication centre connected to the 9-1-1 network to which 9-1-1 calls are routed directly from a Primary PSAP.
- u) PSAP Organization: The entity which operates a PSAP. Some PSAP organizations run multiple PSAP facilities.
- v) PSAP Process Managers: Individuals responsible for PSAP pre-arranged backup processes to maintain continuity in the event the PSAP does not have a backup business partner.
- w) Supervised Transfer: A PSAP Telecommunicator redirects a 9-1-1 call to another location and stays on the line until the intended agency is communicating with the caller.
- x) Telecommunicator (TC): A person employed by a PSAP (primary or secondary) qualified to answer and/or evaluate incoming emergency calls and provide for the appropriate emergency response either directly or through communication

with the appropriate PSAP. A Telecommunicator is a live person, not an interactive voice recorder. Note: PSAPs may use different terminology with the same meaning including “Emergency Communications Officer” or “9-1-1 Emergency Communicator” as used in the Alberta 9-1-1 Grant Program Guidelines.

1.5 Failure to Perform

- a) In cases where the PSAP fails to meet its obligations, as outlined in these Standards, the following process will be followed on a progressive basis:
 - i. Initially, the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will advise the PSAP in person or by call of areas where the PSAP is not in compliance, and will mutually agree on a time period for the PSAP to come into compliance. The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will follow up with a letter summarizing what was agreed to, including timelines.
 - ii. If the PSAP fails to comply within the agreed upon time period, the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will formally meet with the PSAP to discuss and develop a written plan of action, with timelines for the PSAP to come into compliance.
 - iii. If the PSAP fails to come into compliance with the Alberta 9-1-1 standards within the agreed upon timelines, a letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs will be sent to the PSAP, and all communities they serve, with respect to the PSAP’s non-compliance.

1.6 Requirements

The terms “shall”, “must”, “mandatory”, “will” and “required” are used throughout this document to indicate requirements and to differentiate from those parameters that are recommendations. Recommendations are identified by the words “should”, “may”, “desirable”, or “preferable”.

1.7 Standards Application

The Alberta 9-1-1 Standards apply to both Primary and Secondary PSAPs providing 9-1-1 Services within the province of Alberta.

2.0 Call Management

2.1 Goal of the 9-1-1 Call Management Process

- a) Standardize 9-1-1 service (where available) to provide Albertans with timely access to emergency services.

2.2 Responsibilities

- a) It is the responsibility of on-duty TCs to answer all in-coming 9-1-1 calls. All 9-1-1 lines will have answering priority over non-9-1-1 lines or administrative lines. All 9-1-1 lines at a Primary PSAP shall be answered beginning with only “9-1-1...” (Pronounced “Nine-One-One”, never “Nine Eleven”). Calls are answered by the PSAP as they are received.
- b) The Primary PSAP TC is responsible for obtaining the basic information from the caller. At a minimum, this information must include:
 - i. Emergency service required
 - ii. General location of the incident
 - iii. Call back number of caller
- c) When 9-1-1 calls are transferred to a Secondary PSAP, or a Telecommunicator in the same PSAP, the call shall be answered by identifying the type of emergency service such as, police dispatch, fire dispatch, or ambulance dispatch. The Secondary PSAP TC, or TC in the same PSAP is responsible for obtaining:
 - i. The specific address or location of the emergency
 - ii. Details from the caller about the emergency in progress
- d) Each PSAP will determine how to obtain the basic required information (see points above) within its policies and procedures.

2.3 Standard 9-1-1 Calls

- a) The TC obtains the emergency service required from the caller. The PSAP will determine how to obtain this information (for example, by asking “What is your emergency?” or “Do you require fire, police, or ambulance?”)
- b) The TC obtains from the caller the general location of the incident to determine the appropriate emergency service to transfer the call to, if required. Determining the town or city of the incident would qualify as “general location.”
- c) If the ANI information does not appear to be a valid phone number, the TC will obtain the phone number from the caller for potential call back purposes.

2.4 Call Transfers (when applicable)

- a) Once the appropriate emergency service or PSAP has been determined, the call

shall be processed or transferred to another TC, emergency service or PSAP as quickly as possible according to the minimum targets outlined in Section 3.1 of this document.

- b) The TC shall instruct the caller to stay on the line and advise the caller they are being connected to the appropriate emergency service.
- c) When transferring a 9-1-1 call, to another PSAP, Secondary PSAP, or dispatch authority, the PSAP TC will perform a supervised transfer, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- d) Non-emergency calls will be dealt with according to existing local PSAP protocols.

2.5 Non-Standard 9-1-1 Calls

a) Abandoned/Hang-up calls

i. Wireless

- When there appears to be a valid phone number in the ANI, the TC will attempt to contact the caller (call, text, etc.) **once**. The TC may leave a message according to local PSAP protocols. Wireless abandoned calls will not be forwarded to Secondary PSAPs.
- If contact is made with the caller, the TC will follow 9-1-1 call answer protocol for standard calls described in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of these Standards.

ii. Landline

- The Primary PSAP TC will call back at least **once**, in accordance with local PSAP protocols. If the phone is busy or there is no answer, the TC shall transfer the call to police for follow-up investigation if this has not already occurred. If a Secondary PSAP receives a transferred abandoned / hung-up landline call from a Primary PSAP, the secondary PSAP does not need to initiate a call back as this has already been completed by the Primary PSAP. However, if a landline call becomes abandoned / hung-up during the Secondary PSAP call evaluation, the Secondary PSAP will follow the protocols in section 2.5 a) ii.
- If contact is made with the caller, the TC will follow 9-1-1 call answer protocol for standard calls described in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of these Standards.

- iii. When there appears to be no valid phone number in the ANI (i.e. a 9-1-1 Prefix Call), no follow up or transfer to a dispatcher or Secondary PSAP is required as no action can be taken.

b) Open-line calls

i. Wireless

- The PSAP TC will make best efforts to listen for background noise for as long as needed to determine if the caller is in distress. Efforts will be made to get the attention of the caller at least **twice** according to local procedures. If background noise or other cues suggest that an emergency exists, the PSAP TC shall transfer the call to police indicating what was heard on the line. If no apparent distress is indicated and there is a valid phone number in the ANI, the TC will disconnect the call and attempt to contact (call, text, etc.) once. If the call back is answered and there are any signs of distress, the TC shall transfer the call to police for follow up investigation. If the call back is not answered, the TC may leave a message according to local PSAP protocols and the call will be terminated with no further action required.

ii. Landline

- The PSAP TC will make best efforts to listen for background noise for as long as needed to determine if the caller is in distress. Efforts will be made to get the attention of the caller at least **twice** according to local PSAP protocols. All open-line landline calls will be forwarded to police. If a Secondary PSAP receives a transferred open-line landline call from a Primary PSAP, the secondary PSAP does not need to attempt to get the attention of the caller, as this has already been completed by the Primary PSAP. However, if a landline call becomes open-line during the Secondary PSAP call evaluation, the Secondary PSAP will follow the protocols in section 2.5 b) ii.

- iii. When there appears to be no valid phone number in the ANI (i.e. a 9-1-1 prefix call), no follow up or transfer to a dispatcher or Secondary PSAP is required as no action can be taken.

c) Possible distress

- If the caller indicated there is no emergency at the time, the TC shall ask a yes or no question to determine if it is safe for the caller to talk (for example, by asking “are you free to talk?”) If the caller answers “no”, then the incident shall be dealt with as an emergency and the call will be transferred to police.
- If the caller answers “yes” the call is handled according to local PSAP protocols.

d) Unintentional and misdialed calls

- Will be handled according to local PSAP protocols.

e) Frivolous/Vexatious calls

- i. When a caller, with no apparent emergency, continues to dial 9-1-1 after being instructed to stop phoning, the PSAP TC should forward the call to police. The PSAP TC may disconnect the call when service is not requested.
- ii. Processes regarding the handling of frivolous and/or vexatious callers are further highlighted in Section 6.1 of these Standards.

2.6 Use Discretion

If there is any concern as to how a call should be dealt with, PSAP TCs will always err on the side of caution, and exercise their discretion when transferring calls.

2.7 Alternate Language Calls

An alternate language translation service must be available to the TC to assist in processing alternate language calls.

3.0 Quality Assurance

3.1 Performance Targets

- a) The following are the minimum targets related to the answering and transferring of a 9-1-1 call:
- i. All 9-1-1 calls should be answered within 15 seconds, 95 per cent of the time.¹
 - ii. For all 9-1-1 voice calls, where the TC is not doing call evaluation, the TC should initiate the transfer (when required) to another jurisdiction's Primary PSAP, a Secondary PSAP, or dispatcher within 60 seconds after the call has been answered, 95 per cent of the time.

3.2 Quality Assurance Reporting

Requirement	Timeline	Evaluation criteria	Submitted to	Reviewer
Quality Assurance Plan	Reviewed and/or updated as needed by PSAP organization every three years or when changes to technology or call processing may impact quality assurance	Outlined in Section 3.3	Alberta 9-1-1 Program	Quality assurance working group as required
Internal Audit	Completed by PSAP organization annually	Processes in Quality Assurance Plan and Alberta 9-1-1 Standards (Section 3.4)	Not submitted, unless requested	Reviewed internally unless requested by Alberta 9-1-1 Program

Standards Compliance Report	Completed by PSAP organization annually	Template provided by Alberta 9-1-1 Program based on the Alberta 9-1-1 Standards. Details in Section 3.5	Alberta 9-1-1 Program	Alberta 9-1-1 Program
Site Visits and Standards Compliance Letter	Completed every two years by the Alberta 9-1-1 Program	Standards Compliance Report and Internal Audit Records, if requested. Outlined in Section 3.6	PSAP	Alberta 9-1-1 Program with report to Minister of Municipal Affairs or designate

¹ National Fire Protection Association 1221, section 7.4.1

3.3 Quality Assurance Plan

- a) Each PSAP organization must develop a written quality assurance plan for conducting quality assurance on call taking. This document should be reviewed and updated, if needed, every three years or when changes to technology or call processing may impact quality assurance. The quality assurance plan must be submitted to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program, and may be reviewed by a quality assurance working group, as needed. The quality assurance working group may make suggestions to improve a PSAP organization's quality assurance plan, if needed, and will be led by the Alberta 9-1-1 Program, with members from PSAP organizations across the province.
- b) The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will coordinate a quality assurance working group, made up of representatives from various PSAP organizations, who can be called upon to provide peer review of quality assurance documents and processes, as needed.
- c) The PSAP organization's quality assurance plan shall include:
 - i. The minimum amount of audio and 9-1-1 call logs and related information that the PSAP organization will review. (PSAPs will not submit audio and 9-1-1 call logs to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program).
 - ii. How often audio and 9-1-1 call logs and related information will be reviewed.
 - iii. How much of each TC activity will be reviewed.

- iv. Record retention policy for quality assurance records, logs, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) entries, and audio recordings of calls.
- v. Statement confirming that PSAP will aim to meet the minimum targets outlined in Section 3.1.

3.4 Internal Audit

- a) Each PSAP must complete, at a minimum, an annual internal audit. PSAPs must address any deficiencies that are identified in the annual audit.
- b) The internal audit must compare actual calls to the process each PSAP organization has documented to comply with these Standards. The internal audit findings must document compliance with these Standards.
- c) The Alberta 9-1-1 Program may ask to view internal audits during site visits to confirm that an internal audit exists. PSAP organizations must provide internal audits to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program, if requested. Personal information should be redacted in any reports submitted to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program.

3.5 Standards Compliance Report

- a) Each PSAP organization must complete an annual Standards Compliance Report according to the template established by the Alberta 9-1-1 Program. This template will be based on all sections of the Alberta 9-1-1 standards. Standards Compliance Reports must be provided to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program annually.
 - i. PSAP organizations must retain quality assurance records in accordance with PSAP records retention policy (see Section 3.3) and these records must be provided to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program upon request.

3.6 Site Visits

- a) The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will conduct site visits to PSAPs at least every two years. During the visit the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will review compliance with the standards outlined in this document.
 - i. If documents are going to be reviewed during a site visit, the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will advise the PSAP organization at least one month prior to the visit and will advise the timeframe the review will cover. The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will provide the PSAP organization with a list of required information which must be accessible during the visit.
 - ii. Within eight weeks after the site visit, the Alberta 9-1-1 Program will provide the PSAP Manager with a Standards Compliance Audit Report (“report”) detailing their findings.
 - iii. If there are any deficiencies identified in the site visit report, the PSAP

organization will provide the Alberta 9-1-1 Program with a written response within eight weeks of the date of the report, identifying how and when (a mutually agreed upon time) deficiencies will be addressed. If deficiencies have been addressed prior to the PSAP's response, the PSAP shall indicate this in the written response. This written response will be signed by the individual designated on the grant agreements, or his/her designate.

- iv. The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will issue a standards compliance letter to the PSAP within sixty (60) calendar days after the written response is received from the PSAP. A report on PSAP compliance will be provided to the Minister of Municipal Affairs or designate.

3.7 9-1-1 Accreditation

- a) PSAPs in Alberta may obtain 9-1-1 accreditation from associations or bodies if they desire, so long as the PSAP meets the Alberta 9-1-1 Standards.

4.0 Facility and Business Continuity

4.1 Continuous Operation

- a) The main PSAP facility must be designed, equipped, and staffed to ensure continuous operation (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). At all times, 9-1-1 calls should be answered and transferred according to the targets outlined in Section 3.1 of these Standards.

4.2 Facility Standards

- a) The main PSAP facility must be designed and equipped for continuous operation as listed above:
 - i. The design of the main PSAP shall be based on the number of personnel needed to meet the performance targets as detailed in Section 3.1.
 - ii. PSAP organizations should conduct a hazard risk assessment when choosing allocation for their facilities. The Alberta Emergency Management Agency has provided some guidance for this assessment in Appendix B.

4.3 Security

- a) Entry to the main PSAP and other buildings and structures that contain equipment essential to the operation of the PSAP shall be restricted to authorized personnel as defined by the PSAP organization's internal policy.
 - i. Entryways and doorways to the PSAPs shall be protected by self-closing locking doors.
 - ii. Security cameras must be in place to view the entryway and exits to the main PSAP at all times. PSAP personnel must be able to view live footage of the entryway and exits. This video footage should be retained for a minimum of 48 hours.

4.4 Electrical Power

- a) Each main PSAP will have an alternate source of electrical power (i.e. a generator) capable of carrying the full electrical load of the PSAP and supplying sufficient power for the regular operation of all the PSAP's functions including environmental systems (lighting, HVAC etc.).
- b) All equipment required for continuous operations of a main PSAP shall have an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS).
- c) Alternate sources of electrical power will be full-load tested annually, and operationally tested at least monthly. A full-load test can either be a live test or a dummy load test on the alternate sources of electrical power. The test results will

be documented in the PSAP's Standard Compliance Report (See Section 3.5).

- d) PSAPs must have a process to ensure alternate sources of electrical power can be fueled 24/7. This can be achieved through:
 - i. Natural gas generators;
 - ii. Agreements in place with a third-party fueling vendor to provide 24/7 delivery and emergency contact information, or;
 - iii. Municipal or Federal department responsible for refueling, commits in writing to 24/7 refueling priority.
- e) When applicable, attention should be given to how fuel will be delivered if normal transportation routes are impacted by a local disaster. If critical PSAP staff or fuel truck operators cannot access an area during a state of emergency, they can call the local Emergency Operations Centre or the Provincial Operations Centre at 1-866-618-2362.

4.5 Emergency Response Plan

- a) Each PSAP organization must develop and adopt an emergency response plan for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from situations that either require the main PSAP site to be vacated or where the main PSAP is unable to operate to the level outlined in Section 3.1. This plan must be submitted to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program within one year after the Alberta 9-1-1 standards take effect, and a minimum of every three years thereafter. If the plan changes significantly, the most recent copy must be submitted within one calendar year. If a PSAP changes any of the eight points below, it is considered a "significant change." The emergency response plan must be tested in a live environment at least twice per year, and conduct one live or tabletop exercise to test evacuation procedures. A live test could either be a test call or a real 9-1-1 call from the public. Results from the live tests and tabletop exercises must be documented, for review during site visits. Tabletop and live tests can occur concurrently. It is the PSAP organization's responsibility to keep the emergency response plan current and updated. This plan will include:
 - i. The identity and location of the backup PSAP (or PSAPs), known as a "business partner(s)", with which the PSAP has entered into an agreement to handle 9-1-1 calls, if the 9-1-1 calls are unable to be answered in the timeframes outlined in Section 3.1 . If a PSAP does not have a business partner, they must identify their internal business practices to ensure 9-1-1 continuity.
 - ii. The location of an evacuation facility the PSAP would move to if the main site is no longer functioning or safe.
 - iii. The procedures for establishing operations at the evacuation facility within

one hour.

- iv. The details of how backup procedures will be live and / or tabletop tested and the results documented.
- v. Manual procedures that will be enacted in the event of electronic failures (such as use of printed maps and procedural manuals).
- vi. Evacuation and staff notification procedures.
- vii. How to maintain and operate the evacuation facility.
- viii. Return to the main facility procedures.

4.6 Evacuation Facility (second physical location)

- a) Every PSAP shall designate an evacuation facility location. Evacuation facilities must be operational until the main site can resume operations. If PSAP operations cannot resume at the main site, PSAPs must bring the evacuation facility into compliance with the Standards that apply to main sites within one year of the evacuation. In addition, PSAPs must also re-establish a new evacuation facility within two years of evacuating the main facility.
- b) The evacuation facility shall be capable, when staffed, of performing 9-1-1 call answer and transfer process/functions performed at the main site as outlined in Section 3.1 of these Standards. The evacuation facility, when activated, must be designed, equipped, and staffed to ensure continuous operation (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). The design of the evacuation facility shall be based on the number of personnel needed to meet the performance targets in Section 3.1.
- c) The evacuation facility shall be separated geographically from the main site at a location that minimizes or eliminates the impacts that may affect the main location. Operations must be established within one hour at the evacuation facility. Some PSAP organizations may be unable to establish operations within the one hour timeframe due to the distance between the main site and evacuation facility. In these circumstances, the PSAP organization must obtain prior written acknowledgement that the PSAP business partner will be responsible for handling call overflow for more than 60 minutes. This can be written into the business partner agreement, or in a separate document and must be submitted to the 9-1-1 Program. Evacuation facilities should consider other likely hazards when choosing locations based on the Alberta risk information in Appendix B.
- d) Evacuation facilities shall not depend on the functioning of any equipment or technology at the main site. Evacuation facilities must have a direct connection to the 9-1-1 network.
- e) Shared evacuation facilities must be able to simultaneously handle the normal

9-1-1 call volume of both/each PSAPs.

- f) 9-1-1 calls to the main site shall automatically overflow to a pre-arranged alternate call answer process until the transfer of operations to the evacuation facility is complete. The alternative call answer process must ensure that no 9-1-1 calls are lost or left unanswered.
- g) Backup mapping (either paper or electronic) must be available at the evacuation facility.
- h) In cases of shared evacuation facilities, each PSAP must have separate and dedicated 9-1-1 call answering and data acceptance capabilities.
- i) Entry to the evacuation facility and other buildings or structures that contain equipment essential to the PSAP operation, shall be restricted to authorized personnel, as defined by the PSAP organization's internal policy. Entryways and doorways to the evacuation facility shall be protected by self-closing locking doors.

4.7 Overflow Alternative Call Answer Process

- a) In the event of high call volume, planned maintenance, or failure of a PSAP, 9-1-1 calls will be automatically routed to the pre-arranged backup PSAP or internal PSAP process. PSAP organizations must have a business partner agreement or process through which 9-1-1 calls will automatically failover after waiting in a queue for no longer than 120 seconds. If the outage is planned, the PSAP will notify their backup PSAP or internal PSAP process managers in advance. PSAPs should have processes with their business partners, or internal PSAP process managers to handle 9-1-1 overflow calls.
- b) All 9-1-1 primary/secondary lines into a PSAP, backup PSAP, and evacuation facility must be connected directly to the 9-1-1 network on the TELUS 9-1-1 service provider platform.
- c) TCs at backup PSAPs, or individuals in charge of backup processes, will make every reasonable effort to answer and transfer calls according to the performance targets outlined in Section 3.1 of these Standards.
- d) PSAPs must provide backup PSAPs, or internal PSAP process managers, with relevant information such as agency telephone lists and maps etc.
- e) 9-1-1 TCs at backup PSAPs, or individuals in charge of backup processes, should familiarize themselves with the processes and maps from the PSAPs to which they provide backup support.
- f) Backup PSAP processes must be reviewed and validated in live and/or tabletop tests annually (see section 4.5).

4.8 Equipment – Major Components

- a) PSAPs must have the ability to:
 - i. Answer all 9-1-1 call types
 - ii. Capture caller and location information from the telephone providers
 - iii. Transfer 9-1-1 calls to other PSAPs, or appropriate entities

4.9 Redundant Systems

- a) Any issue which prohibits the ability to receive, process, or transfer emergency calls must be quickly handled with minimal disruption. Redundant systems are required to continue operation when a failure causes the loss of a needed resource.
- b) The method of redundancy and resiliency will vary between PSAPs/PSAP Organizations. Major components, as defined above in Section 4.8, after the demarcation point must be highly available and redundant at the main site. Evacuation facilities should have the same high availability and redundancy. Highly available means major components are not out of service more than 5.25 minutes per year. PSAPs must have a local protocol for testing major components monthly.

4.10 Telephone Service Outages

- a) In the event of a failure of the primary phone system, each PSAP shall have:
 - i. An automatic failover in place with TELUS to reroute calls to a pre-arranged backup PSAP in another jurisdiction; or the PSAP will transfer calls to an operational backup facility in the same jurisdiction.
 - ii. A procedure to reroute 9-1-1 phone calls.
 - iii. Upon learning of a 9-1-1 system outage, PSAPs should contact a designated representative from the affected community. Communities, at their discretion, can use the Alberta Emergency Alert (AEA) System to notify citizens in these circumstances. The AEA instructions to the public shall clearly outline backup procedures for emergency calls.

4.11 Rationale for Evacuation

- a) Relocation of personnel may be required for a variety of reasons. Safety of PSAP staff needs to be of paramount concern. Reasons for evacuating a PSAP include:
 - i. Uninhabitable environment. (situations when the PSAP is unsafe for personnel to continue daily operations). These conditions may include but are not limited to:
 - Fire/smoke condition;
 - Gas leak;
 - Radiation/Hazardous Materials threats;
 - Structural damage;

- Flooding;
 - HVAC failure; and
 - Bomb Threats/Found.
- ii. Power failure including backup generator, or 9-1-1 phone system failure.
 - iii. Any other circumstances for which the PSAP determines an evacuation is warranted.

4.12 Return to Main Site

- a) Prior to returning to the Main 9-1-1 Centre, the PSAP Organization shall ensure that it is safe for personnel to return. Returning to a Main centre can occur when the PSAP can sustain continuous operations in accordance with Section 3.1 of these Standards.

5.0 Alberta 9-1-1 Program Inquiry Process

5.1 Public Inquiries about 9-1-1 Calls to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program

- a) The following procedure outlines the general process for public inquiries regarding a 9-1-1 call.
 - i. An inquiries email address (aema911@gov.ab.ca) is posted on the 9-1-1 webpage. <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-911-program.aspx>
 - ii. Alberta 9-1-1 Program staff will forward the inquiry to the relevant PSAP.
 - iii. PSAPs must follow-up directly on inquiries within 14 days, and advise Alberta 9-1-1 Program staff of the outcome when the matter has been dealt with.
 - iv. PSAP organizations must have local release of information procedures to deal with public inquiries.

6.0 Frivolous and Vexatious Calls

6.1 Process for Handling Frivolous and Vexatious 9-1-1 Calls

- a) Under Section 8 of the Alberta *Emergency 911 Act*, “No person shall make a frivolous or vexatious 911 call.”
- b) The Alberta *Emergency 911 Act* does not define frivolous or vexatious 9-1-1 calls, as this will be left up to the courts to determine. For the purpose of this document, the working definition of a frivolous or vexatious call is any deliberately made non-emergency 9-1-1 call that could potentially tie up public safety resources unnecessarily. Frivolous and vexatious 9-1-1 calls waste time and abuse the service or staff resources in non-emergency situations. Accidental calls to 9-1-1 including pocket dials will not normally be considered frivolous or vexatious. This aligns with public statements made by the Government of Alberta regarding the matter.
- c) Alberta PSAPs should handle frivolous or vexatious calls as follows:
 - i. For first time violations, PSAPs may issue a warning to the offending caller, if the PSAP determines this is appropriate.
 - ii. Following that, PSAPs could collect evidence against frivolous or vexatious callers, then report the nature and specifics of a potentially frivolous or vexatious call to local law enforcement.
 - iii. Local law enforcement may investigate and, if warranted, lay a charge, against the individual who is accused of an offence.
- d) The Alberta 9-1-1 Program has public education materials available regarding the appropriate use of 9-1-1 to help reduce accidental, frivolous, or vexatious 9-1-1 calls.

7.0 Next Generation 9-1-1

7.1 NG9-1-1 Terminology

Below are definitions/terminology used throughout the NG9-1-1 section of the Standards.

- a) Call Media Handling System: handles all communication from the caller. It includes the interfaces, devices and applications utilized by the TCs to handle the call / session.
- b) Call taking session: the answering of a voice call, a text message, and in the future, streaming video, at a PSAP.
- c) Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC): regulates the telecommunications service providers who supply the networks needed to direct and connect 9-1-1 calls to PSAPs.
- d) CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) Emergency Services Working Group (ESWG): a volunteer group comprised of hundreds of Telecommunication Service Providers, PSAPs, and 9-1-1 Industry specialists. The Working Group addresses issues that relate to the provisioning of 9-1-1 services. This includes the technical and operational implementation of 9-1-1 services as assigned by the CRTC or as requested by stakeholders.
- e) Emergency Incident Data Object (EIDO)/JavaScript Object Notation (JSON): A standard format and content for exchanging emergency incident related data.
- f) Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet): a managed Internet Protocol (IP) network that is used for emergency services communications, and which can be shared by all public safety agencies responsible for 9-1-1 services. It provides the IP transport infrastructure upon which independent application platforms and core services can be deployed, including, but not restricted to, those necessary for providing NG9-1-1 services. The term ESInet designates the network, not the services that are delivered on the network.
- g) Local Area Network (LAN): a computer network that interconnects computers within a limited area, such as a PSAP, for sharing resources or exchanging data.
- h) National Emergency Number Association (NENA) i3 Standard: Internet 3 (NENA Internet phase 3 solution). In Telecom Decision 2015-531, the CRTC approved the adoption of the NENA i3 Architecture standard for NG9-1-1 in Canada. NENA is an international 9-1-1 standards body.
- i) Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1: a secure, nationwide, interoperable, standards-based, all-IP emergency communications infrastructure. This will enable end-to-end transmission of all types of data, including voice and multimedia communications

from the public to a PSAP.

- j) NG9-1-1 mission critical components: includes the ability to accept call taking sessions (voice, data and multimedia) over the ESInet and transferring those sessions to other agencies.
- k) Real-time text (RTT): a protocol in which the text message is transmitted instantly as it is being typed.

7.2 Background

As the Canadian 9-1-1 network evolves to NG9-1-1, it is important that Alberta has high quality 9-1-1 services, consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions. This section of the Alberta 9-1-1 Standards outlines what PSAPs will have to do to transition to NG9-1-1.

As directed by the CRTC, the incumbent local exchange carriers must complete the following by the dates specified in Appendix C;

- Establish NG9-1-1 voice-capable networks
- Establish RTT capability; and
- Decommission the legacy 9-1-1 Network

7.3 General

The purpose of this section is to ensure PSAPs are positioned to respond to NG9-1-1 system changes mandated within current and future CRTC decisions. PSAPs should refer to guiding documents posted on the national NG9-1-1 portal managed by the CRTC ESWG.

7.4 Voice Communications

PSAPs must implement NG9-1-1 for voice communications at their main site and evacuation facility by connecting to the ESInet.

- a) PSAPs must accept 9-1-1 voice calls delivered over the ESInet by the date specified in Appendix C. In order to do this, PSAPs must:
 - i. Have a NENA i3 compliant call / media handling system that follows the guiding documents posted on the national NG9-1-1 portal managed by ESWG.
 - ii. Have a system enabling 9-1-1 voice calls to be appropriately prioritized and delivered into the queue.
 - iii. Be able to process and transfer the call data between PSAPs via the EIDO.
 - iv. Implement logging systems capable of recording and storing NG9-1-1 voice and data sessions.

7.5 Text Messaging

- a) PSAPs must implement text with 9-1-1 for deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired individuals (DHHSI) by the date specified in Appendix C. Once the PSAP has implemented text with 9-1-1, they must register with www.textwith911.ca to let the public know the service is available.
- b) PSAPs must accept RTT sessions via the ESInet at their main site and evacuation facility by the dates specified in Appendix C. In order to do this, PSAPs must:
 - i. Have a NENA i3 compliant RTT handling system that follows the guiding documents posted on the national NG9-1-1 portal managed by ESWG.
 - ii. Have a system enabling 9-1-1 RTT sessions to be appropriately prioritized and delivered into the queue.
 - iii. Be able to process and transfer RTT sessions between PSAPs via EIDO.
 - iv. Implement logging systems capable of recording and storing RTT sessions, and other non-voice communications.

7.6 NG9-1-1 Systems

- a) Call/media handling systems:
 - i. PSAPs should work with vendors to adopt industry standards to ensure that their systems are interoperable.
 - ii. PSAPs Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/mapping platforms must follow provincial and national standards as detailed in the TELUS NG9-1-1 Agreement by the date specified in Appendix C.
- b) PSAPs must develop a policy to ensure vendors, contracted service providers, or centralized IT, have appropriate public safety security clearances, consistent with local PSAP organization protocols. This policy does not need to be submitted to the Alberta 9-1-1 program, but shall be made available for review during 9-1-1 Program site visits.
- c) PSAPs should ensure highly available and redundant dual hardware configuration and/or real-time software failover for hardware and software that support mission critical components at their main site and evacuation facility. This should be complete by the date specified in Appendix C.
- d) PSAPs should implement a scalable dedicated LAN, including computing/storage hardware capabilities at their main site and evacuation facility.
- e) For NG9-1-1, PSAPs must have the ability to capture emergency incident information at their main site and evacuation facility by the date specified in Appendix C. This replaces the ANI/ALI data delivered under E9-1-1.

- f) PSAPs should ensure that other systems that may require enhancements or changes to support the NENA i3 architecture, or connection to the ESInet, are updated to support the transition to NG9-1-1.

7.7 Cybersecurity

In the NG9-1-1 environment, PSAPs will be connected to multiple systems and networks, so PSAPs must have robust cybersecurity measures in place to mitigate threats. At a minimum PSAPs should respond to cybersecurity threats according to the ESWG best practices. PSAPs must meet the NENA i3 and TELUS cybersecurity requirements to connect to the ESInet. PSAPs should consider carrying insurance against cyber security threats, as well as having real time data recovery practices. PSAPs shall develop and implement a real time monitoring and managing capability for cybersecurity by the date specified in Appendix C. In addition, PSAPs must:

- a) Develop an enterprise security plan for main PSAP sites and evacuation facilities by the date specified in Appendix C. PSAPs shall review the enterprise cybersecurity plan annually. This plan must be available for review by the 9-1-1 Program during site visits but does not need to be submitted to the 9-1-1 Program. The enterprise cybersecurity plan must include:
 - i. A risk-based approach to ensure security.
 - ii. Frequency of vulnerability assessments and penetration tests that will be conducted.
 - iii. An employee awareness plan and cybersecurity training plan for staff and business partners.
 - iv. How PSAPs will proactively deploy security infrastructure (e.g. De-Militarized Zone, firewalls etc.) to allow for external connectivity.
 - v. How PSAPs will respond to notifications about cybersecurity threats at other centres.
 - vi. How PSAPs will conduct environmental scans, at least every two years, to remain current on emerging technology capabilities.
 - vii. How PSAPs will protect personal information by making reasonable security arrangements to mitigate risks such as unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure, or destruction.
 - viii. How this strategy will be developed and maintained.
 - ix. A governance structure to enable rapid decisions.
- b) Within one hour of a potential cyberattack, PSAPs must notify the Alberta Provincial Operations Centre (POC) at 1-866-618-2362, using the security

posture values specified in the NENA i3 Standard. The POC will forward this notification to all Alberta PSAPs to respond.

- c) Each PSAP must conduct an initial internal cybersecurity audit 30 days after connecting to the ESInet. This audit must be completed at a minimum annually and should be completed each time a new system is connected to the NG9-1-1 network. The internal cybersecurity audit must compare actual processes to the enterprise security plan. This internal audit does not need to be submitted to the Alberta 9-1-1 Program but must be available for review by the 9-1-1 Program during site visits.
- d) The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will coordinate a cybersecurity working group, made up of various stakeholder representatives, who can provide and maintain an enterprise security plan template and share best practices as needed.

7.8 NG9-1-1 Transition Deadline

PSAPs must complete the transition to NG9-1-1 capabilities at their main site and evacuation facility according to the timelines specified in Appendix C.

7.9 Emergency Services Working Group (ESWG) Participation

Each PSAP should assign a resource(s) to monitor the CRTC ESWG decisions and timelines by the date specified in Appendix C.

7.10 Public Education

- a) PSAPs will work with the Alberta 9-1-1 Program to coordinate and share information about NG9-1-1 services and timelines.
- b) The Alberta 9-1-1 Program will use stakeholder feedback to develop consistent messaging across the province regarding NG9-1-1 transitions.

8.0 Administration

8.1 Records Management

- a) PSAPs should follow Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. If the PSAP is a Federal entity, they should follow Canada's *Access to Information Act* and *Privacy Act* as well as any federally prescribed record management protocols. Specifically, PSAPs must:
 - i. Establish record retention and destruction policies and procedures for personal information obtained through 9-1-1 services. PSAPs' record retention and destruction policies should align with existing contracts they have with clients. These policies and procedures should be updated when new data sources are introduced.
 - ii. Implement data storage, retention, and information security systems that are capable of addressing current record types, and new multi-media data sources.

8.2 Staffing

- a) 9-1-1 Telecommunicators are required to integrate multiple data streams to support decision making. To support this, PSAPs must develop and demonstrate:
 - i. A process to ensure job descriptions are kept current.
 - ii. Initial training program for new staff that details the skillsets or competencies employees must meet to perform the role.
 - iii. Continuous training to keep pace with technological and process changes.

8.3 Staff Supports

- a) PSAPs must provide mental health supports to their employees.
- b) PSAP staff must have access to critical stress peer supports either internally, or externally through a resource like the Alberta Critical Incident Peer Network (<https://abcism.ca/acipn-peer-advisory-council/>).
- c) PSAPs must provide adequate training for mental health supports.

9.0 Call Evaluation

9.1 Call Evaluation Process

PSAPs will utilize an accredited or documented call evaluation process to obtain information from the caller.

9.2 Call Evaluation Priority

9-1-1 call evaluation begins immediately after basic information has been obtained from the caller according to section 2.2 b). Call evaluation must be performed in a timely and efficient manner. Priority should be given to engage the agency or agencies best suited to respond, based on the safety of citizens and responders.

9.3 Local Co-Evaluation Policy

PSAPs must have a local co-evaluation policy to manage 9-1-1 calls requiring multi-agency evaluation. This local policy must include the circumstances for which co-evaluation may be engaged, and the processes for simultaneous notification. A best practice for co-evaluation can be found in Appendix D.

9.4 Engaging Other Agencies

When other agencies need to be engaged, a TC must either:

- a) Co-evaluate: following either the co-evaluation best practices detailed in Appendix D or following the local PSAP co-evaluation policy; or
- b) Call transfer: following the Call Transfer standards in section 2.4.

Appendix B – Alberta Risk Information

PSAPs should conduct a risk assessment to ensure that when new facilities are being built, PSAPs have accounted for local hazards and conditions. Risk assessments are the responsibility of PSAPs and they can use the resources in this appendix to conduct the assessment. The following are some hazards with the highest risk in Alberta (in no particular order). Links to more information are included.

- a) Hazardous Material (Hazmat) Transportation incident (Rail):
https://www.proximityissues.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2013_05_29_Guidelines_NewDevelopment_E.pdf
- b) Wildfire: <http://wildfire.alberta.ca/firesmart/default.aspx>
- c) Flooding: <https://www.alberta.ca/flood-hazard-identification-program.aspx>
- d) High Intensity Residential Fire (HIRFs): <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/high-intensity-residential-fires-working-group-final-report>
- e) Oil and Gas emergency (pipeline): <http://www.aer.ca/providing-information/about-the-aer/contact-us/emergency-response>
- f) Road Transportation (Hazmat) incident:
<https://www.alberta.ca/hazardous-wastetransportation.aspx>

Note: These are only some of the highest level risks in Alberta that could affect a PSAP facility. Various other risks exist that are not facility related, or are a moderate, low, or very low level of risk in Alberta. For some more risk-based land-use guidelines, Natural Resources Canada has published a guide that can be downloaded from the following link:

https://geoscan.nrcan.gc.ca/starweb/geoscan/servlet.starweb?path=geoscan/download_e.web&search1=R=295981

PSAPs should use the Community Emergency Management Program (CEMP) online tool to perform a facility risk assessment based on the risks in their community. For more information on CEMP, please contact the Alberta 9-1-1 Program at aema911@gov.ab.ca.

Appendix C – Alberta NG9-1-1 Timelines

Requirement	Deadline	Standards Reference
PSAPs must implement text with 9-1-1 in their centres for deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired individuals. Once implemented, the PSAP must register with www.textwith911.ca	March 1, 2021	7.5 (a)
PSAPs should assign a resource(s) to monitor the CRTC ESWG decisions and timelines.	March 1, 2021	7.9
CRTC requires network providers to establish their NG9-1-1 networks.	March 1, 2022	7.2
PSAPs must accept NG9-1-1 voice communications and associated emergency incident information by connecting to the ESInet.	September 1, 2023	7.4 (a) 7.6 (e)
CRTC deadline to implement RTT capability.	April 16, 2024 (proposed)	7.2
PSAPs must accept RTT sessions via the ESInet.	November 30, 2024	7.5 (b)
PSAPs must complete the transition to the first phase of NG9-1-1 capabilities (voice and RTT).	November 30, 2024	7.8
CRTC deadline to decommission the legacy 9-1-1 network.	March 4, 2025	7.2
PSAPs should ensure highly available and redundant dual hardware and software that supports NG9-1-1 voice and RTT call taking and transferring.	Date of connection to the ESInet	7.6 (c)
PSAPs GIS/mapping platforms must follow provincial and national standards.	Date of connection to the ESInet	7.6 (a) (ii)
PSAPs shall develop and implement a real time monitoring and managing capability for cybersecurity.	Date of connection to the ESInet	7.7
PSAPs must complete an enterprise security plan and initial audit.	30 days after connecting to the ESInet	7.7 (a), (c)

Note 1: All deadlines are subject to change based on CRTC decisions related to the coordinated roll out schedule, or at the discretion of the Minister of Public Security and Emergency Services.

Note 2: For non- NG9-1-1 timelines, please reference the relevant sections of the Standards.

Appendix D – Co-Evaluation Best Practice

Purpose: Ensure all Primary and Secondary PSAPs understand the process for co-evaluation and when it is required. This is a reciprocal best practice between Primary and Secondary PSAPs including EMS, Fire and Police agencies within Alberta.

1.0 Definitions

- a) **Co-evaluation** – Active tandem process of allowing agencies to gather the information they require in a timely manner.
- b) **Caller under Duress** – A situation where a caller may be unable to speak freely, answer yes and no questions and/or tap the phone in response or not able to speak at all.
- c) **Emergency Rule** – It may not be possible to provide the same level of service that might have been provided in normal circumstances during unpredicted, exceptional, or overwhelming emergency situations; such as a disaster situation.
- d) **Lead Agency** – The agency with the protocol best suited to ensure safety of citizens and responders.
- e) **Telecommunicator (TC), Emergency Communications Officer (ECO), 9-1-1 Emergency Communicator** – Person employed by a PSAP (Primary or Secondary) qualified to answer incoming emergency telephone calls and provide the appropriate emergency response either directly or through communication with the appropriate PSAP.

2.0 Special Considerations

- a) For agencies using International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) protocols; pre-arrival instructions for sinking vehicle, vehicle in floodwater, and accelerator stuck will be provided by the agency who is first made aware of the event.
- b) Medical Pre-Arrival Instructions found only within Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) fall under the direction of the Provincial Medical Director and will be provided by an Alberta Health Services telecommunicator.
- c) A PSAP may not be able to follow through with co-evaluation due to the Emergency Rule.
- d) Procedures for how to manage co-evaluation will be defined by the PSAP's internal policies.
- e) Barriers to co-evaluation, (e.g. screaming on the line, language considerations,

deaf and hard of hearing, caller under duress etc.)

- f) The priority is to make the initial transfer of the caller to the lead agency. It is not an expectation for the referring agency to remain on the line for the duration of the event if they are unable or have gathered the information they require for their response.
- g) If the initial transfer of a caller is incorrect or additional information is provided by the caller that suggests another Lead agency is more appropriate, the ECO will transfer the event and co-evaluate where required.

3.0 Co-Evaluation between Agencies (EMS, FIRE and POLICE)

When it is identified by an agency that there is an event in which a patient, first responder(s), caller and/or bystanders can benefit from an evaluation and instructions by another discipline, then the agency or agencies capable of mitigating the safety concerns or providing life-saving instructions are required to be brought on for co-evaluation as soon as possible.

These situations can include but are not limited to:

- a) Imminent Scene Safety (e.g. offender on scene, weapons involved).
- b) Critical Hazards (e.g. chemical suicides, structure fire, live wires).
- c) Preservation of Life (e.g. serious or life-threatening injury/illness, stabbing, gunshot wound).
- d) Any event where there is an urgent need for a partner agency to attend or provide instructions.