

Emergency Communications Overview



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“My comments do not represent the opinions of the Resource Center Board of Directors, the PUC 9-1-1 Advisory Task Force, the Public Utilities Commission, the State of Colorado, local 9-1-1 Authorities, or the Public Safety Answer Points of Colorado.”

Topics

- 9-1-1 in Colorado
- Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) in Colorado
- Challenges Concerning ENS
- ENS Jurisdiction and Coordination Issues

9-1-1 in Colorado

- 9-1-1 service is a locally administered and delivered service.
- There are 57 local 9-1-1 Authorities and 98 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).
- Surcharge revenues are remitted directly to local 9-1-1 Authorities.
- Each 9-1-1 Authority decides what to fund from its surcharge revenues within the limits set in statute.

Emergency Notification Systems

- Statute authorizes 9-1-1 Authorities to expend 9-1-1 surcharge funds on Emergency Notification Systems (ENS).
- ENS are not required, and are purchased as an option by some but not all local 9-1-1 Authorities.
- Since each are purchased separately, there are a number of different vendors providing ENS.
- ENS are managed and can be activated by different agencies, depending on jurisdiction.

ENS Challenges

- Different ENS have different features and limitations.
- Accuracy of geocoding and specificity of call delivery varies.
- ONLY traditional landlines are included automatically. Everything else has to be added in separately or opted in by the user.

ENS Challenges (continued)

- The call delivery rate varies by system, ranging from dozens of calls per minute to thousands of calls per minute.
- ENS calls or texts to opt-in mobile devices are not location based.

Jurisdiction and Coordination Issues

- If an emergency notification must be sent to an area spanning two jurisdictions, different systems may be used, and they are not integrated.
- Because mobile users opt-in to the service, they may opt-in for multiple ENS, resulting in conflicting or confusing information.
- Mobile users who have opted in will still receive notifications even if they are currently in a different area.

Jurisdiction and Coordination Issues (continued)

- Third-party notification services, websites, and apps may also conflict with emergency messages being disseminated by ENS.
- The IPAWS program has started to roll out CMAS (Commercial Mobile Alert System) which is an opt-out location based alerting system, which only works on some carrier networks and is also not integrated with local ENS.

Questions?