

AB 1564 (Williams)

9-1-1 Emergency Response – Wireless Routing Optimization

SUMMARY

AB 1564 requires the Office of Emergency Services (CAL OES) to work closely with the California Highway Patrol (CHP), local PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Point) and the wireless industry to take all the necessary actions to maximize the efficiency of the 9-1-1 system.

BACKGROUND

In January of 2014, a tragic and preventable accident occurred in Santa Barbara. A 23 year old woman was found by her brother to be unresponsive. He called 9-1-1 from his cell phone and his call was first routed to the CHP, delaying the response time. The City of Santa Barbara dispatched emergency response to a location on the other side of town, resulting in an additional 10 minutes from initial dispatch to arrive at the correct location. As a result of the delay, the young woman died.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident as many non-freeway wireless 9-1-1 calls in California are routed to CHP and delays in response time can result in tragedy. It is essential that every effort be made to route wireless 9-1-1 calls to the most appropriate Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP). In some areas, CHP will be the PSAP and in other areas, it will be the local fire, emergency medical services or law enforcement PSAP.

An emergency response system should start with routing a 9-1-1 call to the public safety force that responds more often to the area. To have an intermediate step - sending the call somewhere else first for no function or purpose, only to be transferred - introduces delays and occasionally, when something else goes wrong, results in a tragedy.

In Santa Barbara, depending on your cell phone carrier, if you call 9-1-1 from the front steps of the local police department, which houses the dispatch center for local emergency response, the call may be routed to the Ventura CHP center, 30 miles south. This results in an average delay of over a minute (including busy signals, dropped calls, and long hold times). A landline call from the same location will go directly to the local police department without delay. This process is

counterintuitive, but very real, occurring frequently throughout the state.

Only about 13% of the state has been "optimized" to ensure calls are being routed appropriately. In a state dense with both freeways and cell phones, improving our state's emergency response system to save precious seconds and lives is imperative.

NEED FOR THE BILL

AB 1564 addresses routing delays by specifying that a call from a cell device may be routed to a local Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) other than the California Highway Patrol (CHP), if:

- The call originates from a location other than a freeway,
- The alternate routing is economically and technologically feasible,
- The alternate routing will benefit public safety, and
- It will result in 9-1-1 calls being routed to the responsible responding jurisdiction that covers the location of the call origination point.

By clarifying the process by which an alternate PSAP is selected, people in emergency situations will reach the most efficient emergency responders the first time, shaving minutes from response times. This will dramatically improve lifesaving outcomes for the public who call 9-1-1.

SUPPORT

- California League of Cities
- California Fire Chiefs Association
- California Peace Officers' Association
- County of Santa Barbara
- Fire Chiefs Association of Santa Barbara County
- Fire Districts Association of California

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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