

**WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACT  
OF 1999**

[SECTIONS 2, 4, 6, and 7 OF THE WIRELESS  
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACT OF 1999]

[Public Law 106–81, Enacted October 26, 1999]

[As Amended Through P.L. 116–260, Enacted December 27, 2020]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 106–81. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

**SECTION 1. [47 U.S.C. 609 note] SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999”.

**SEC. 2. [47 U.S.C. 615 note] FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) the establishment and maintenance of an end-to-end communications infrastructure among members of the public, emergency safety, fire service and law enforcement officials, emergency dispatch providers, transportation officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities will reduce response times for the delivery of emergency care, assist in delivering appropriate care, and thereby prevent fatalities, substantially reduce the severity and extent of injuries, reduce time lost from work, and save thousands of lives and billions of dollars in health care costs;

(2) the rapid, efficient deployment of emergency telecommunications service requires statewide coordination of the efforts of local public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials, emergency dispatch providers, and transportation officials; the establishment of sources of adequate funding for carrier and public safety, fire service and law enforcement agency technology development and deployment; the coordination and integration of emergency communications with traffic control and management systems and the designation of 9–1–1 as the number to call in emergencies throughout the Nation;

(3) emerging technologies can be a critical component of the end-to-end communications infrastructure connecting the public with emergency medical service providers and emergency dispatch providers, public safety, fire service and law en-

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forcement officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities, to reduce emergency response times and provide appropriate care;

(4) improved public safety remains an important public health objective of Federal, State, and local governments and substantially facilitates interstate and foreign commerce;

(5) emergency care systems, particularly in rural areas of the Nation, will improve with the enabling of prompt notification of emergency services when motor vehicle crashes occur; and

(6) the construction and operation of seamless, ubiquitous, and reliable wireless telecommunications systems promote public safety and provide immediate and critical communications links among members of the public; emergency medical service providers and emergency dispatch providers; public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials; transportation officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to encourage and facilitate the prompt deployment throughout the United States of a seamless, ubiquitous, and reliable end-to-end infrastructure for communications, including wireless communications, to meet the Nation’s public safety and other communications needs.

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**SEC. 4. [47 U.S.C. 615a] SERVICE PROVIDER PARITY OF PROTECTION.**

(a) PROVIDER PARITY.—A wireless carrier, IP-enabled voice service provider, or other emergency communications provider, and their officers, directors, employees, vendors, and agents, shall have immunity or other protection from liability in a State of a scope and extent that is not less than the scope and extent of immunity or other protection from liability that any local exchange company, and its officers, directors, employees, vendors, or agents, have under Federal and State law (whether through statute, judicial decision, tariffs filed by such local exchange company, or otherwise) applicable in such State, including in connection with an act or omission involving the release to a PSAP, emergency medical service provider or emergency dispatch provider, public safety, fire service or law enforcement official, or hospital emergency or trauma care facility of subscriber information related to emergency calls, emergency services, or other emergency communications services.

(b) USER PARITY.—A person using wireless 9–1–1 service, or making 9–1–1 communications via IP-enabled voice service or other emergency communications service, shall have immunity or other protection from liability of a scope and extent that is not less than the scope and extent of immunity or other protection from liability under applicable law in similar circumstances of a person using 9–1–1 service that is not via wireless 9–1–1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service.

(c) PSAP PARITY.—In matters related to 9–1–1 communications via wireless 9–1–1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service, a PSAP, and its employees, vendors, agents, and authorizing government entity (if any) shall have im-

munity or other protection from liability of a scope and extent that is not less than the scope and extent of immunity or other protection from liability under applicable law accorded to such PSAP, employees, vendors, agents, and authorizing government entity, respectively, in matters related to 9–1–1 communications that are not via wireless 9–1–1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service.

(d) BASIS FOR ENACTMENT.—This section is enacted as an exercise of the enforcement power of the Congress under section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution and the power of the Congress to regulate commerce with foreign nations, among the several States, and with Indian tribes.

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**SEC. 6. [47 U.S.C. 615a-1] DUTY TO PROVIDE 9-1-1 AND ENHANCED 9-1-1 SERVICE.**

(a) DUTIES.—It shall be the duty of each IP-enabled voice service provider to provide 9–1–1 service and enhanced 9–1–1 service to its subscribers in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Communications Commission, as in effect on the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008 and as such requirements may be modified by the Commission from time to time.

(b) PARITY FOR IP-ENABLED VOICE SERVICE PROVIDERS.—An IP-enabled voice service provider that seeks capabilities to provide 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 service from an entity with ownership or control over such capabilities, to comply with its obligations under subsection (a), shall, for the exclusive purpose of complying with such obligations, have a right of access to such capabilities, including interconnection, to provide 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 service on the same rates, terms, and conditions that are provided to a provider of commercial mobile service (as such term is defined in section 332(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d))), subject to such regulations as the Commission prescribes under subsection (c).

(c) REGULATIONS.—The Commission—

(1) within 90 days after the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008, shall issue regulations implementing such Act, including regulations that—

(A) ensure that IP-enabled voice service providers have the ability to exercise their rights under subsection (b);

(B) take into account any technical, network security, or information privacy requirements that are specific to IP-enabled voice services; and

(C) provide, with respect to any capabilities that are not required to be made available to a commercial mobile service provider but that the Commission determines under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph or paragraph (3) are necessary for an IP-enabled voice service provider to comply with its obligations under subsection (a), that such capabilities shall be available at the same rates, terms,

and conditions as would apply if such capabilities were made available to a commercial mobile service provider;

(2) shall require IP-enabled voice service providers to which the regulations apply to register with the Commission and to establish a point of contact for public safety and government officials relative to 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 service and access; and

(3) may modify such regulations from time to time, as necessitated by changes in the market or technology, to ensure the ability of an IP-enabled voice service provider to comply with its obligations under subsection (a) and to exercise its rights under subsection (b).

(d) **DELEGATION OF ENFORCEMENT TO STATE COMMISSIONS.**—The Commission may delegate authority to enforce the regulations issued under subsection (c) to State commissions or other State or local agencies or programs with jurisdiction over emergency communications. Nothing in this section is intended to alter the authority of State commissions or other State or local agencies with jurisdiction over emergency communications, provided that the exercise of such authority is not inconsistent with Federal law or Commission requirements.

(e) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—

(1) **LIMITATION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the Commission to issue regulations that require or impose a specific technology or technological standard.

(2) **ENFORCEMENT.**—The Commission shall enforce this section as if this section was a part of the Communications Act of 1934. For purposes of this section, any violations of this section, or any regulations promulgated under this section, shall be considered to be a violation of the Communications Act of 1934 or a regulation promulgated under that Act, respectively.

(f) **STATE AUTHORITY OVER FEES.**—

(1) **AUTHORITY.**—Nothing in this Act, the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.), the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008, or any Commission regulation or order shall prevent the imposition and collection of a fee or charge applicable to commercial mobile services or IP-enabled voice services specifically designated by a State, political subdivision thereof, Indian tribe, or village or regional corporation serving a region established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (85 Stat. 688) for the support or implementation of 9–1–1 or enhanced 9–1–1 services, provided that the fee or charge is obligated or expended only in support of 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 services, or enhancements of such services, consistent with the purposes and functions designated in the final rules issued under paragraph (3) as purposes and functions for which the obligation or expenditure of such a fee or charge is acceptable. For each class of subscribers to IP-enabled voice services, the fee or charge may not exceed the amount of any such fee or charge applicable to the same class of subscribers to telecommunications services.

(2) **FEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT.**—To ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the collection and expendi-

ture of a fee or charge for the support or implementation of 9-1-1 or enhanced 9-1-1 services, the Commission shall submit a report within 1 year after the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008, and annually thereafter, to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives detailing the status in each State of the collection and distribution of such fees or charges, and including findings on the amount of revenues obligated or expended by each State or political subdivision thereof for any purpose or function other than the purposes and functions designated in the final rules issued under paragraph (3) as purposes and functions for which the obligation or expenditure of any such fees or charges is acceptable.

(3) ACCEPTABLE OBLIGATIONS OR EXPENDITURES.—

(A) RULES REQUIRED.—In order to prevent diversion of 9-1-1 fees or charges, the Commission shall, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, issue final rules designating purposes and functions for which the obligation or expenditure of 9-1-1 fees or charges, by any State or taxing jurisdiction authorized to impose such a fee or charge, is acceptable.

(B) PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS.—The purposes and functions designated under subparagraph (A) shall be limited to the support and implementation of 9-1-1 services provided by or in the State or taxing jurisdiction imposing the fee or charge and operational expenses of public safety answering points within such State or taxing jurisdiction. In designating such purposes and functions, the Commission shall consider the purposes and functions that States and taxing jurisdictions specify as the intended purposes and functions for the 9-1-1 fees or charges of such States and taxing jurisdictions, and determine whether such purposes and functions directly support providing 9-1-1 services.

(C) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—The Commission shall consult with public safety organizations and States and taxing jurisdictions as part of any proceeding under this paragraph.

(D) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

(i) 9-1-1 FEE OR CHARGE.—The term “9-1-1 fee or charge” means a fee or charge applicable to commercial mobile services or IP-enabled voice services specifically designated by a State or taxing jurisdiction for the support or implementation of 9-1-1 services.

(ii) 9-1-1 SERVICES.—The term “9-1-1 services” has the meaning given such term in section 158(e) of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 942(e)).

(iii) STATE OR TAXING JURISDICTION.—The term “State or taxing jurisdiction” means a State, political subdivision thereof, Indian Tribe, or village or regional corporation serving a region established pursuant to

the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(4) PARTICIPATION.—If a State or taxing jurisdiction (as defined in paragraph (3)(D)) receives a grant under section 158 of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 942) after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, such State or taxing jurisdiction shall, as a condition of receiving such grant, provide the information requested by the Commission to prepare the report required by paragraph (2).

(5) PETITION REGARDING ADDITIONAL PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A State or taxing jurisdiction (as defined in paragraph (3)(D)) may submit to the Commission a petition for a determination that an obligation or expenditure of a 9–1–1 fee or charge (as defined in such paragraph) by such State or taxing jurisdiction for a purpose or function other than a purpose or function designated under paragraph (3)(A) should be treated as such a purpose or function. If the Commission finds that the State or taxing jurisdiction has provided sufficient documentation to make the demonstration described in subparagraph (B), the Commission shall grant such petition.

(B) DEMONSTRATION DESCRIBED.—The demonstration described in this subparagraph is a demonstration that the purpose or function—

(i) supports public safety answering point functions or operations; or

(ii) has a direct impact on the ability of a public safety answering point to—

(I) receive or respond to 9–1–1 calls; or

(II) dispatch emergency responders.

(g) AVAILABILITY OF PSAP INFORMATION.—The Commission may compile a list of public safety answering point contact information, contact information for providers of selective routers, testing procedures, classes and types of services supported by public safety answering points, and other information concerning 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 elements, for the purpose of assisting IP-enabled voice service providers in complying with this section, and may make any portion of such information available to telecommunications carriers, wireless carriers, IP-enabled voice service providers, other emergency service providers, or the vendors to or agents of any such carriers or providers, if such availability would improve public safety.

(h) DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS.—The Commission shall work cooperatively with public safety organizations, industry participants, and the E-911 Implementation Coordination Office to develop best practices that promote consistency, where appropriate, including procedures for—

(1) defining geographic coverage areas for public safety answering points;

(2) defining network diversity requirements for delivery of IP-enabled 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 calls;

(3) call-handling in the event of call overflow or network outages;

(4) public safety answering point certification and testing requirements;

(5) validation procedures for inputting and updating location information in relevant databases; and

(6) the format for delivering address information to public safety answering points.

(i) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008 shall be construed as altering, delaying, or otherwise limiting the ability of the Commission to enforce the Federal actions taken or rules adopted obligating an IP-enabled voice service provider to provide 9–1–1 or enhanced 9–1–1 service as of the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008.

(j) **SEVERABILITY CLAUSE.**—If any provision of this section or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this section and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

**SEC. 7. [47 U.S.C. 615b] DEFINITIONS.**

As used in this Act:

(1) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation.

(2) **STATE.**—The term “State” means any of the several States, the District of Columbia, or any territory or possession of the United States.

(3) **PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT; PSAP.**—The term “public safety answering point” or “PSAP” means a facility that has been designated to receive 9–1–1 calls and route them to emergency service personnel.

(4) **WIRELESS CARRIER.**—The term “wireless carrier” means a provider of commercial mobile services or any other radio communications service that the Federal Communications Commission requires to provide wireless 9–1–1 service.

(5) **ENHANCED WIRELESS 9–1–1 SERVICE.**—The term “enhanced wireless 9–1–1 service” means any enhanced 9–1–1 service so designated by the Federal Communications Commission in the proceeding entitled “Revision of the Commission’s Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 9–1–1 Emergency Calling Systems” (CC Docket No. 94–102; RM–8143), or any successor proceeding.

(6) **WIRELESS 9–1–1 SERVICE.**—The term “wireless 9–1–1 service” means any 9–1–1 service provided by a wireless carrier, including enhanced wireless 9–1–1 service.

(7) **EMERGENCY DISPATCH PROVIDERS.**—The term “emergency dispatch providers” shall include governmental and non-governmental providers of emergency dispatch services.

(8) **IP-ENABLED VOICE SERVICE.**—The term “IP-enabled voice service” has the meaning given the term “interconnected VoIP service” by section 9.3 of the Federal Communications Commission’s regulations (47 CFR 9.3).

(8)<sup>1</sup> OTHER EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE.—The term “other emergency communications service” means the provision of emergency information to a public safety answering point via wire or radio communications, and may include 9–1–1 and enhanced 9–1–1 service.

(9) OTHER EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDER.—The term “other emergency communications service provider” means—

(A) an entity other than a local exchange carrier, wireless carrier, or an IP-enabled voice service provider that is required by the Federal Communications Commission consistent with the Commission’s authority under the Communications Act of 1934 to provide other emergency communications services; or

(B) in the absence of a Commission requirement as described in subparagraph (A), an entity that voluntarily elects to provide other emergency communications services and is specifically authorized by the appropriate local or State 9–1–1 service governing authority to provide other emergency communications services.

(10) ENHANCED 9–1–1 SERVICE.—The term “enhanced 9–1–1 service” means the delivery of 9–1–1 calls with automatic number identification and automatic location identification, or successor or equivalent information features over the wireline E911 network (as defined in section 9.3 of the Federal Communications Commission’s regulations (47 C.F.R. 9.3) as of the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008) and equivalent or successor networks and technologies. The term also includes any enhanced 9–1–1 service so designated by the Commission in its Report and Order in WC Docket Nos. 04–36 and 05–196, or any successor proceeding.

<sup>1</sup>So in law. The amendment by section 201(b) of Public Law 110–283 probably should have been made to insert new paragraphs (9)–(11). Section 101(3) of such Public Law adds a new paragraph (8) (relating to IP-enabled voice service). (See 122 Stat. 2623 and 2624.)