

# PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

## VIRGINIA

James E. Davis, ENP, Coordinator  
Emergency  
Management & Communications  
P.O. Box 426  
Chatham, Virginia 24531  
Jim.davis@pittgov.org



Phone (434) 432-7920  
Fax (434) 432-7950  
Gretna/Hurt (434) 656-6211  
[www.pittsylvaniacountyva.org](http://www.pittsylvaniacountyva.org)

### NEWS RELEASE

November 30, 2015

**To:** All News Media, All Pittsylvania County Board's, Agencies and Commissions  
**From:** James E. Davis, ENP, Emergency Management Coordinator *JED*  
**Date:** November 30, 2015  
**Subject:** **Text to 911**

Pittsylvania County 911 will begin receiving "text to 911" effective December 1, 2015. Please see below our instructions on how to utilize this new lifesaving application.

Texting 911 is only intended to be used in the following emergency scenarios:

- For residents who are speech or hearing impaired.
- For an individual who faces a circumstance in which texting is the best and safest way to contact 911.

"In both emergency scenarios, 'text to 911' could be a lifesaver, the second emergency scenario could develop, for example, in the instance of a home invasion or abduction in which a potential victim doesn't want to be heard making a voice call."

There are limitations to the system.

- Use the texting option only when a voice call to 911 is not an option. It can take longer to receive a text message because someone must enter the text, the message then goes through the system, and the emergency dispatcher must read the text and then text back. Picking up the phone and calling 911 is still the most efficient way to reach emergency help. Texting is not always instantaneous, which is critical during a life threatening emergency.
- Provide location information and the nature of the emergency in the first text message. This action is imperative, since the Emergency Communications Center will not be able to speak with the person sending the text. Do not use text abbreviations or slang so that the intent of the dialogue can be as clear as possible. Texts sent to 911 have the same 160 character limit as other text messages.
- When texting, users must be in range of cell towers in Pittsylvania County. If users are outside or near the edge of the County, the message may not reach the Emergency Communications Center.

- Not all wireless carriers and other text messaging providers yet deliver emergency texts. Verizon, TMobile, NTELOS and AT&T customers can use “text to 911” if their mobile phones are capable of sending text messages. Any text message to 911 will count either against the customer’s messaging plan or charges may apply.
- Use the texting function only for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire or emergency medical services.
- Text messages should only be used to communicate between Emergency Communications Center and the sender. Pictures, video, other attachments or including other recipients are not able to be accommodated at this time.

###