VoIP Checklist

✔ Verify that you can access 9-1-1 with your VoIP service. Check with your service provider's website for emergency calling features.

✔ Be sure to keep your registered location current with your VoIP provider.

✔ If the power is out, your VoIP service may be out too. Consider purchasing a back-up power supply.

✔ Inform children, babysitters and visitors about your VoIP service.

✔ Post your address and call-back phone number near your phone.

✔ Know what police department and fire department is responsible for your 9-1-1 call and have their phone numbers on hand to provide to the call taker.

9-1-1 DOs and DON'Ts

✔ 9-1-1 is for police, fire and medical emergencies.

✔ If you call 9-1-1, don't hang up.

✔ Don't call 9-1-1 for jokes or prank calls.

✔ When you call 9-1-1, pay attention to the questions that you are being asked.

✔ Stay calm and speak clearly.

✔ Stay on the line until you are told to hang up.

✔ For further questions or for additional information, contact your local 9-1-1 Center.

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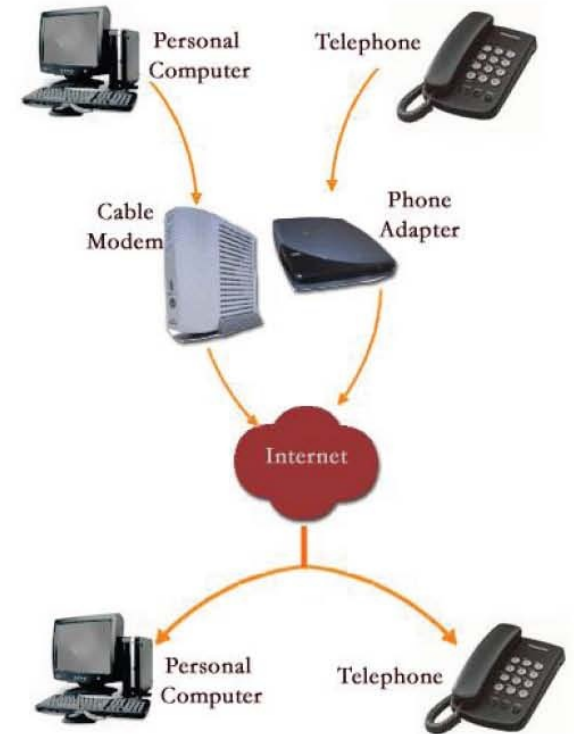Leaders in Public Safety Communications

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*This pamphlet pertains to traditional 9-1-1 service. For information on other 9-1-1 services such as **9-1-1 & Children**, **9-1-1 & Seniors** and **9-1-1 & Wireless**, go to www.IL911INFO.org or contact your local 9-1-1 Center.*

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

VoIP & 9-1-1

Voice-over Internet Protocol

Personal Computer — Telephone — Cable Modem — Phone Adapter — Internet — Personal Computer — Telephone

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VoIP

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

is a rapidly growing alternative to traditional telephone service. Its popularity is fueled primarily by low prices, new features and the consumer's ability to choose a phone number from nearly anywhere in the U.S.

While VoIP is an attractive option, it is important for consumers to understand the potential limitations the technology has with respect to accessing 9-1-1.

VoIP, in many ways, looks and works just like a regular phone. The primary difference between the two is how your voice is transported from "here to there." With a traditional telephone service, your conversation, for the most part, is analog and is connected over a single static pathway over the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

In contrast, VoIP telephone conversations are digital and may take one or more different paths over the Internet, or private networks, to reach the called party.

VoIP services can be called different names. You may hear it referred to as "Broadband Phone," "VON" (Voice on [the] Net), "Cable Phone," "Digital Telephone" or "Net Phone," among others.

VoIP & 9-1-1

Not all VoIP service providers are created equal when it comes to emergency calling.

FCC Mandate 05-116 states that all VoIP service providers must enable 9-1-1 calling and provide callback and location information. Some VoIP providers have yet to meet these FCC requirements.

Currently, there are two ways your VoIP 9-1-1 call can be processed:

VoIP Basic Emergency Calling

The call is not routed to your local 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) emergency lines. Instead, it is sent to a remote private call center or a non-emergency line without location information and possibly without your callback number. This type of processing can delay an emergency response.

VoIP Enhanced 9-1-1 Calling

This call is routed over a dedicated 9-1-1 network and arrives at your local 9-1-1 PSAP with both customer registration location and callback number.

Customers need to research the VoIP 9-1-1 calling features that their VoIP service provider offers. To verify that your VoIP 9-1-1 services are accurate, contact the customer service department of your VoIP service provider.

FAQs

Can I dial 9-1-1 from my VoIP phone?

You can reach assistance by dialing 9-1-1 on most VoIP phones. However, there are differences between VoIP 9-1-1 and traditional 9-1-1 services. It is important to familiarize yourself with these differences.

How is my 9-1-1 call routed to the current location?

When you sign up for VoIP, you must register your location. For 9-1-1 emergency dialing to work properly, the service address on file for you must correspond to the physical location of your VoIP phone.

Do service outages affect my ability to call 9-1-1?

Just like a cordless phone, if the power is out you may not be able to make an outgoing call on a VoIP phone. Also, if there is a service interruption with your internet provider, you may not be able to make or receive phone calls.

Can I make a 9-1-1 test call from my VoIP phone?

It depends. Before doing so, please contact your 9-1-1 call center on the non-emergency line. Confirm that you are in their jurisdiction and ask if you can place a test 9-1-1 call. Many centers will comply .