

9-1-1/9-8-8 Transfer Recommendations

Purpose

To ensure appropriate resources are allocated to people seeking assistance, 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and 9-8-8 Lifeline Centers may establish standards and protocols that enable communication interoperability between both centers. Because each center faces unique challenges and serves different populations, local policies will be tailored to meet the needs of their specific jurisdiction. As a result, it is recommended that 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and 9-8-8 Lifeline Centers within the same jurisdiction establish an informal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to define interactions between both centers.

Bidirectional call transfers between 9-1-1 and 9-8-8 face unique challenges. Consequently, this document aims to stimulate discussion and offer preliminary recommendations to guide local policy formulation.

Recommendations

9-1-1 to 9-8-8 Transfers

When and How to Initiate

A 9-1-1 dispatcher may transfer a call to 9-8-8 when:

- The caller is experiencing a mental health crisis and is not an immediate threat to life or public safety
- The caller expresses suicidal thoughts or emotional distress but is not actively attempting self-harm
- Law enforcement, fire, or medical intervention is not required on scene

How to Initiate:

- The 9-1-1 dispatcher conducts an initial assessment and determines that behavioral health intervention is more appropriate
- Following departmental policy, and established informal agreement, or MOU between the PSAP and 9-8-8 Lifeline Center, the 9-1-1 dispatcher may initiate a transfer to the 9-8-8 Lifeline Center. The 9-1-1 Dispatcher informs the caller they are being transferred to a crisis counselor and advises the caller to remain on the line while the transfer takes place. Once connected, information will be provided to the 9-8-8 Lifeline Center.
- The caller should be Advised that, if disconnected, they can call, text, or chat 988 directly.

- When feasible, the 9-1-1 dispatcher may attempt a warm handoff and provide relevant caller information in accordance with the PSAP policy.

9-8-8 to 9-1-1 Transfers

When and How to Initiate

A 9-8-8 counselor may initiate a transfer to 9-1-1 when:

- The caller presents imminent risk to themselves or others
- Caller reports an active emergency medical condition
- Telephone-based crisis intervention is deemed ineffective or insufficient, and escalation to in-person intervention is necessary to ensure caller's safety Law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical services are requested

How to Initiate:

- Inform the caller they are being transferred
- Counselor will remain on the line during the transfer
- Once the PSAP answers, the counselor announces the transfer and provides necessary information

Recommended Information When a Transfer or Notification Occurs Between 9-1-1 and 9-8-8:

- Name and agency making the transfer
- Name of the caller, if available
- Caller address or location, if exact address is unavailable
- Caller phone number
- Incident number, when available
- Circumstances or reason for the transfer or notification
- Any other relevant safety information (e.g. weapons, threats of violence, alcohol or drug use)

Implementation Considerations

- Policies, informal agreements, or MOUs between the PSAP and 9-8-8 Lifeline Center should address procedures for transfers using 10-digit 9-8-8 Lifeline Center numbers
- Policies, informal agreements, or MOUs between the PSAP and 9-8-8 Lifeline Center should address procedures for transferring non-English speakers and utilizing translation services