

911 / 988 TRANSFER/HANDLING CRITERIA - DRAFT

This is a draft document created by the 911/988 Interface Working Group for the 988 Technical Advisory Board

Policy

To provide the best service possible to address the needs of callers experiencing a mental health crisis, it is necessary for 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and 988 Lifeline centers utilize standards and protocols that provide guidance on when 988 centers will transfer calls received on 988 to 9-1-1, and vice versa.

Procedures

PSAP Transfer Criteria

When a call is received by a PSAP from a caller that may be experiencing a mental health crisis that does not require a public safety response (law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical services), the call taker should offer to transfer the subject to 988 for mental health assistance.

Call takers will follow agency policies, procedures, and training when determining which calls to transfer to 988 for handling. The following are suggested criteria to aid in determining when transfer a 9-1-1 caller to 988:

1. Caller is possibly experiencing a mental health crisis or is calling on behalf of another person experiencing a mental health crisis. This could include conditions such as psychosis, mania or depression, or other mental health or substance use disorder.
2. Caller or other person has suicidal ideations with no immediate risk to harm self or others.
3. Caller or other person does not have access to necessary mental health medications or is experiencing issues due to mental health medications.

The following types of situations or incidents will not be transferred to 988

1. Person threatening to jump from a bridge or structure
2. Person needs emergency medical attention
3. Person has a weapon and is in public with others present
4. Person has a weapon and is inside a residence/building with others present
5. Suicide in-progress
6. Reports from uninvolved callers regarding persons not known to the caller

988 Center Transfer/Emergency Services Notification Criteria

988 personnel will follow agency policies, procedures, and training when determining which calls to transfer a caller to 9-1-1 or to notify emergency services for response (law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical services). The following are suggested criteria to aid in determining when to transfer a 988 caller to 9-1-1 or when emergency services should be engaged:

- Injuries to any person that may require an emergency medical response.
- A weapon is involved, or the involved person is known to be in possession of a weapon, weapon, is in the presence of others, and the involved person has a history of violence or is threatening violence.
- Serious criminal activity is occurring now.
- Person known to be wanted by law enforcement for the commission of a violent crime that poses a threat to public safety.
- Threat of immediate violence, or reasonable potential for immediate violence, or use of violence towards self or others
- Law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical services are specifically requested, or other information is presented that would require the response of emergency service.

Transfer Process from 9-1-1 to 988

Transferring a 9-1-1 call to 988

- Inform the caller that the situation might be best handled by a crisis counselor and seek the caller's consent or acknowledge prior to initiating the transfer
- Inform the caller to stay on the line while the transfer takes place and once connected the dispatcher will briefly provide information to the crisis counselor that answers.
- Advise the caller that they if they are disconnected during the transfer, the caller can call or text 988 directly
- Once connected, the dispatcher will provide necessary information about the caller to the crisis counselor
- Once transfer confirmed successful, the dispatcher can evaluate disconnecting from the call

The following is an example of verbiage that can be used by a dispatcher to seek consent or acknowledgement from a caller prior to transferring to 988:

Based on what you've told me, I think speaking with a crisis counselor at the 988 Crisis Line might be a good option for you. This is a service that provides support for those in crisis, including help for situations similar to yours. Would you be willing to be transferred to the 988 Crisis Line?

The following is an example of verbiage that can be used by a dispatcher when transferring a caller to 988:

I'm going to transfer you to the 988 Lifeline now. I will remain on the line and briefly provide with the crisis counselor background information about your situation. Please stay on the line.

Information To Be Provided When a Transfer or Notification Occurs

When a transfer or notification is made between 988 and 9-1-1, the transferring center will provide the following information, when possible, to the center receiving the transferred call.

- Name and agency making the transfer
- Name of the caller
- Caller address or location if exact address is unavailable
- Caller phone number
- Circumstances or reason for the transfer or notification
- Any other relevant information

If the caller is disconnected during the transfer, the dispatcher or crisis counselor will attempt to call the caller back.

Items still to consider addressing:

Procedures and processes when the location of the caller is not known and limited information is available (phone number, IP address, etc.)

9-1-1 and 988 centers being able to access or view basic dispositions or status of transferred calls

Interoperability with 9-1-1 from Chat 988 calls