
Voice over Internet

VoIP

VoIP is a technology that allows voice quality calls to be made over Internet connections. The appeal of VoIP includes the cost savings associated with making long distance calls over the Internet and the ability to take your phone service with you anywhere in the world. However, these advantages could prove to be a major disadvantage in the case of an emergency.

Providers of traditional wire-line telephone service in Massachusetts are required by state law to provide their customers with access to Enhanced 911 (E 9-1-1). This system automatically displays the address and telephone number of the emergency caller on a screen at all 9-1-1 communications centers in Massachusetts, commonly referred to as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). Because VoIP is regulated at the federal level, VoIP service providers (VSPs) are not subject to the Commonwealth's E 9-1-1 requirement. In June of 2005 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued an Order, (FCC 05-116) mandating that all VSPs deliver E 9-1-1 services no later than November 28, 2005.

The SETB has worked with our E 9-1-1 service provider and VSPs serving Massachusetts to integrate the technology into our E 9-1-1 system. Before a VSP can be approved to provide VoIP service in Massachusetts they must go through a testing process with the SETB to ensure the calls are delivered with complete and accurate information. For a list of VSPs currently approved to provide E 9-1-1 service in Massachusetts please see below.

If you are considering subscribing to a VoIP service, it is essential to remember the following points:

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- Confirm with the VSP that they provide E 9-1-1 services and are in compliance with FCC Order 05-116
 - Provide your accurate physical address to your VSP to ensure that emergency services can be quickly sent to your location.
 - Be familiar with your VSPs procedures for updating your address, and promptly update address information in the event of a change.
 - Have a clear understanding of any limitations of your 911 service.
 - Inform children, babysitters, and visitors about your VoIP service and its 911 limitations, if any.
 - If the power is out or your broadband connection is down, be aware that your VoIP service may also be out. Consider installing a backup power supply, maintaining a traditional phone line and analog phone, or having a cellular phone as a backup.
 - If you have questions about whether the phone service you are receiving is a VoIP service, contact your service provider for further information.

VSP Test call Procedure

Before a VSP can provide VoIP phone service they must be approved by the SETB. The VSP will begin by following the [test call procedure PDF](#) as set forth by the SETB. **BEFORE** test calls can

be made to the local PSAPs, a VSP must complete system testing with the SETB and receive approval to send test calls to the PSAPs. These tests can be set up by contacting the SETB Systems Group at 508-828-2911. Once SETB approval is received the VSP will contact the PSAP via their business line and ask permission to make the test calls through the E9-1-1 system. If permission is granted, the test call procedure is as follows.

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- Each VSP will have to make a minimum of three test calls into a designated PSAP.
 - Test calls can only be made Monday through Friday between the hours of 8AM and 4PM.
 - Only one test call at a time will be sent into the E9-1-1 lines.
 - The caller will identify themselves as a test caller and will ask that ANI and ALI information be verified by the telecommunicator.
 - Upon completion of the VoIP test calls program, the VSP will contact the SETB for final approval to begin sending true 9-1-1 calls from subscribers within your community.

If you have any questions regarding VoIP in Massachusetts or if you're a VSP and wish to begin E9-1-1 testing in Massachusetts please visit our Service Provider Resources page or contact Jack DiPesa, Systems Analyst, at 508-828-2911. **Contact information for VoIP Network Operation Centers can be found [here](#) Excel.**

Please click [here](#) Word for a list of VSPs that have been approved to test with Massachusetts PSAPs.