

Is My Work Place's Phone System Compliant with Vermont 9-1-1 Law?

Multi-story or multi-location businesses such as hospitals, schools, medical centers, college campuses, hotels, motels, government buildings (municipal, state, and federal), retail and grocery stores need to ask this question.

Every minute counts in an emergency. Lack of accurate location information can cause life-threatening delays in emergency response. In many cases the main billing phone number and address are not enough for emergency personnel to find the 9-1-1 caller. If the caller is having a stroke for example, and cannot speak, or is prematurely disconnected, will responders be able to pinpoint the specific location of the caller WITHOUT his/her assistance? Will responders be sent to 184 Pearl St in Burlington (billing address) when the emergency is actually at 172 Fairfield St in St. Albans?

[30 V.S.A., Chapter 87, §7057](#) requires that all multi-line telephone systems provide the same level of 9-1-1 service that other end users in Vermont receive. It is essential that every telephone connected to a multi-line telephone system provide a callback number and specific locatable address where the 9-1-1 call originated. The specific locatable address must also include a building name or number, floor and/or room number. This information needs to be sent from the telephone system through the 9-1-1 network to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) when someone dials 9-1-1.

What happens when someone dials 9-1-1 from your business' telephone system? A call to 9-1-1 may seem simple, but the information available to call-takers at a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is crucial. Home telephone systems automatically provide the exact location of the phone being used, but if your business has a multi-line telephone system (MLTS), your best efforts to prepare for an on-site emergency could be nullified by your system's inability to provide the same information. That is because when someone dials 9-1-1 through a PBX or Centrex switch, the information passed along to a PSAP usually contains only the billing address of the facility and NOT the exact location (e.g. Flr 2, Room 215) of where the call originated. Depending on how your system is configured, that could send emergency responders to the wrong address, or at least to a location with many offices, floors and unidentified telephone locations. Time wasted as emergency responders locate the source of the emergency can increase danger to people, property, and cause irreparable harm to your business' reputation - not to mention increase your chances of a lawsuit.

Steps toward 9-1-1 compliance. Your phone system's compliance with 9-1-1 should be a critical element in your business' *Emergency Response Plan*. The following are 4 basic steps that your business can take to achieve compliance with 9-1-1:

Step 1 - Determine how many phone lines make up your business' multi-line telephone system.

Step 2 - Inventory precisely where each of those phone lines are physically located within your business workspace, (e.g. 125 South St, Flr 2, Conference Room).

Step 3 - Communicate with your phone system vendor to determine whether your phone system has the functionality to transmit the ten-digit number of the phone line used to dial 9-1-1. If it does not have that functionality, then work with your phone system vendor to establish that functionality.

Step 4 - If it does, then our office can help your business confirm whether the precise location information is populated in the 9-1-1 database for each of your business' phone lines.

We are here to help. Please [contact us](#).