



NEWS RELEASE

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State Tests New 9-1-1 Emergency System For Cellular/Wireless Callers in Los Angeles Area

Sacramento — Department of General Services Director Peter Stamison announced today that the state is conducting a test of enhanced 9-1-1 technology designed to improve emergency response for callers using cellular phones and other wireless communication devices. The Department of General Services (DGS), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), local law enforcement, and private-sector telecommunications carriers are partnering in the test, which covers a 63-square mile area of Los Angeles County and is the most complex such test in the nation.

"This pilot project will go a long way in helping the CHP and other law enforcement agencies respond to 9-1-1 emergencies from cellular phones where the caller is lost, or the call becomes disconnected," said CHP Southern California Chief Ed Gomez. "We are excited to be a part of this test of new technology which can improve public safety."

"This is the ultimate in public/private partnerships," said Wendell McCullough, Deputy Director of the DGS Telecommunications Division, which is responsible for the pilot. "Our private-sector telecom partners have demonstrated a willingness to put their technology to the test, and law enforcement has responded to the challenge."

Under current state law, all cellular 9-1-1 emergency phone calls must be routed to the nearest appropriate CHP communications center, instead of a closer or otherwise more appropriate law enforcement agency. For the first time, enhanced 9-1-1 technology—which allows emergency dispatchers to identify the location and phone number of emergency calls placed over telephone lines—is being tested for use with incoming cellular calls.

Without these enhancements, persons placing 9-1-1 calls using cellular phones have had to tell dispatchers their location and phone number, which can delay response time and tie up incoming lines. This has been a particular problem for cellular callers in emergency situations who do not know their phone number or location. "As part of the pilot program, dispatchers are now able to automatically identify, for the first time, the caller's cellular telephone number and the approximate location of the cell site where the 9-1-1 call is received," Chief Gomez said.

Wireless use of the emergency 9-1-1 system in California has tripled in the past six years, according to CHP statistics. In 1991 there were 972,000 emergency 9-1-1 calls placed from cellular phones. In 1997 the volume of calls increased to 2,786,000.

The Los Angeles County pilot program will demonstrate the collective ability of all parties involved to comply with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirements that wireless carriers provide the caller's telephone number and cell site location information to the proper local emergency

services agency. The pilot will provide a basis for cost analysis and a model for statewide implementation. FCC regulations require wireless carriers to have the capability to further pinpoint the location of wireless 9-1-1 calls to within a half a city block by October 2001.

Participants in the enhanced wireless 9-1-1 pilot include the CHP; the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department/Temple City Station; the Pasadena, San Marino, and Sierra Madre Police Departments; and the Arcadia Fire Department. Private-sector telecommunications participants include wireless providers AirTouch Cellular, L.A. Cellular, Pacific Bell Mobile Services, Sprint PCS; local exchange carriers GTE and Pacific Bell; and database service providers Pacific Bell, SCC Communications, GBH Telcom, and XYPOINT.

McCullough said the cost of the six-month pilot is approximately \$750,000. "The primary funding is being provided by the surcharge collected on all telephone customer intrastate calls through the state's 9-1-1 fund emergency telephone number account," he said.