

# e-COMMUNIQUÉ

E-Comm Newsletter Spring 2014, No.43

**E-Comm 9-1-1**  
Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

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**ecomm911.ca**  
**Twitter: @EComm911\_info**



*Janice Lyons of the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing tests the Text with 9-1-1 system at E-Comm.*

## E-Comm launches special 9-1-1 text service for Deaf and Speech-Impaired

On March 18 members of the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard-of-Hearing and Speech-Impaired (DHHSI) communities in Metro Vancouver and select surrounding areas became the first in Canada to be able to text with 9-1-1 (T9-1-1). This specialized service means that any DHHSI person within the E-Comm service area who pre-registers their cellphone with their wireless

provider can contact emergency services and communicate via text message. T9-1-1 must first be initiated through a voice call which triggers an alert for call-takers to begin texting with the caller.

“We are very pleased to be able to offer people from the DHHSI community in our service area an improved way of communicating with police, fire and ambulance call-takers,” says Doug Watson, vice-president of Operations. “This is a perfect example of how innovation and technology can be used to enhance access to 9-1-1 services in an emergency.”

This new service is a significant improvement to the previous TTY (telephone typewriter) system that is limited to landlines, although E-Comm will continue to accept 9-1-1 calls through TTY.

*Continued on next page >>*



CRTC Chair Jean-Pierre Blais (far left) and Commissioner Stephen Simpson (front left) see T9-1-1 in action.

**“The CRTC congratulates E-Comm as well as the City of Calgary’s emergency call centres for moving so quickly in making the changes required to support this service.”**

**Jean-Pierre Blais,  
CRTC Chair**

Preparations for the T9-1-1 launch kicked into high gear following the January 24 announcement by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), that carriers across the country had completed required network upgrades to allow for the implementation of this new service. T9-1-1 training for close to 300 Operations staff began in February with each staff member receiving one-on-one sessions with a trainer.

Since E-Comm launched T9-1-1, the City of Calgary and the Region of Peel, Ontario, have also launched the new system.

Although no 9-1-1 centre has yet to receive a T9-1-1 call, E-Comm continues to conduct weekly test calls to ensure staff are familiar and comfortable with the new system. We are also working closely with the WIDHH to create a special user guide detailing information about the new service (available on [ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca)) and collaborating on the creation of a step-by-step video in American Sign Language that outlines how members of the DHHSI community can both access and use T9-1-1. For further information visit: [textwith911.ca](http://textwith911.ca).

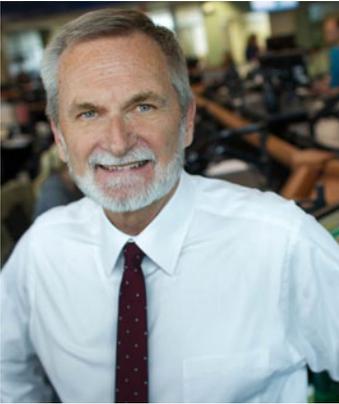
“This is an important enhancement for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and those with speech impairments,” says Janice Lyons, head of Interpreting Services for the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (WIDHH). “To be able to reach this lifeline through a cellphone is a major improvement over the current technology we have been using.”

**In order to access the T9-1-1 service, DHHSI callers must:**

- Pre-register their cellphones with their wireless carrier
- Dial 9-1-1 like any other caller in order to establish a voice network connection
- Call from a community within E-Comm’s service area\*

*\*Visit [ecomm911.ca](http://ecomm911.ca) for details*

# CEO update



*President & CEO David Guscott*

In alignment with our strategic plan *Vision2020* and our goal of expanding services in support of public safety, E-Comm is entering into a new partnership with the Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine, Bulkley-Nechako and Cariboo regional districts for 9-1-1 call-answer services. This is a significant milestone and marks the first time E-Comm will expand its 9-1-1 public safety call-answer services beyond southwest B.C. The transition is scheduled for October 7, 2014 (more information on page 4).

On March 18, E-Comm—in conjunction with our partners—also became the first 9-1-1 call centre in Canada to launch Text with 9-1-1. This new system allows Deaf and Speech-Impaired persons to communicate with 9-1-1 via a specialized text program. The importance of this service will not be measured in the number of times the service is used, but in the enhanced level of access to emergency services now available. Our thanks to Janice Lyons of the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing for her assistance and guidance with our ongoing education efforts.

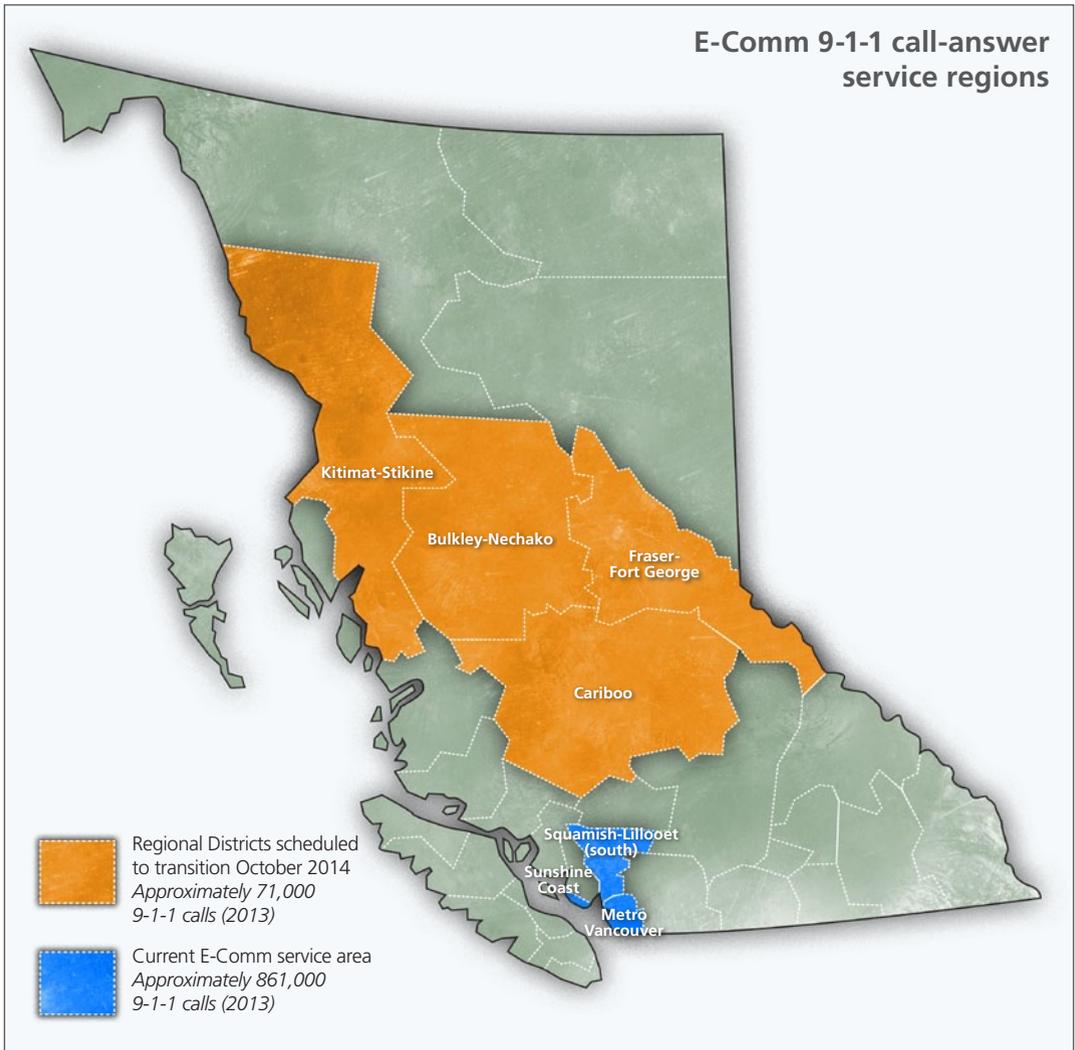
E-Comm's partnership with PRIMECorp—the organization responsible for the police records management system (PRIME-BC) used by police across B.C.—expanded earlier this year when an agreement was signed for E-Comm to provide technical support for PRIME-BC. E-Comm has established itself as a technology leader within the public-safety sector and we believe that coupled with the existing technical expertise within PRIMECorp, there are many opportunities to advance the delivery of PRIME-BC services. Further, this new partnership will allow E-Comm to increase its technical resources and reorganize our service desk to increase hours of operation for external partners.

Providing exceptional service is at the foundation of E-Comm's strategic plan and ensuring we are meeting the needs of our partners is paramount, which is why we undertake a stakeholder survey on a regular basis. In our most recent survey, more than 90% of the police and fire chiefs who responded indicated that they are confident E-Comm can meet their agencies' needs and that they have strong and trusting partnerships with us. Overall, 85% indicated satisfaction with E-Comm services. And in a separate survey of more than 500 residents of the Lower Mainland, 88% reported having confidence in the 9-1-1 and dispatch services provided by E-Comm. These are exceptional results and a strong endorsement of the services we provide.

The next six months of 2014 are shaping up to be just as busy as the first, as we continue to focus on service expansion, service excellence, and operational effectiveness in support of public safety in British Columbia. We look forward to reporting our progress to shareholders, partners and the public.

David Guscott, CEO

# E-Comm service area to expand to northern B.C.



Commencing in October, E-Comm will partner with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) for 9-1-1 call-answer services. This is the first time E-Comm will be the initial point of contact for 9-1-1 (known as a Public-Safety Answer Point) for a region outside of southwest B.C. (Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine, Bulkley-Nechako and Cariboo). The target date for transitioning 9-1-1 services for the four northern regional districts is set for October 7, 2014.

In a news release issued in March, the four regional districts indicated that by taking a consolidated approach through E-Comm, the RDFFG and partner regional districts will see their

**“This agreement is a strong endorsement for the quality of service E-Comm provides and our contribution to public safety in British Columbia.”**

***David Guscott,  
E-Comm CEO***

area and an estimated 62% of provincial 9-1-1 call volume, up from 57%. This equates to an estimated 71,000 additional calls based on last year’s call volume for the RDFFG and partner regional districts.

annual costs reduced by almost 50% through shared staffing and technical resources.

“We are pleased to be able to provide more cost effective 9-1-1 call-answer services without compromising the reliability or safety of the 9-1-1 system that residents in our region have trusted,” stated RDFFG Board Chair Art Kaehn in the news release.

With the signing of this agreement E-Comm will now cover an additional 230,000 square kilometres of service

“This agreement is a strong endorsement for the quality of service E-Comm provides and our contribution to public safety in British Columbia,” says E-Comm CEO David Guscott. “We are committed to ensuring residents of the regional districts continue to receive high-quality, responsive 9-1-1 public-safety answer point service 24-hours a day.”

## Minister of Justice visits E-Comm



*Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton visited E-Comm February 6.*

*E-Comm Board Chair Jocelyn Kelley (L) and CEO David Guscott provided Minister Anton with a tour of the communication centre.*

# Call-takers reach out with top 9-1-1 tips



In appreciation of the hard work and dedication of emergency communications professionals across the province, the government of B.C. declared April 13th – 19th as *Emergency Service Dispatchers' and 9-1-1 Awareness Week* in British Columbia.

This week is an opportunity to recognize and acknowledge the daily contributions of 9-1-1 call-takers, dispatchers, technology specialists and support personnel.

“Those who answer emergency calls and dispatch first responders during times of crisis are often the unsung heroes working behind the scenes to help those in need,” explained E-Comm CEO David Guscott. “Our staff are highly trained, dedicated professionals and we want to take this opportunity to recognize their important contributions to public safety.”

As a means of engaging the public in important 9-1-1 education messages, E-Comm turned to social media and hosted a ‘live’ tweeting session on April 17 to encourage people to ask questions about the 9-1-1 service and the critical role of emergency communications professionals.

**“The Richmond RCMP enjoys the relationship we have with E-Comm and we look forward to it continuing for years to come. On behalf of the Richmond Detachment I send thanks to each and every one of you for your dedication to the job and the first class support to our members.”**

***Rendall Nasset,  
Richmond RCMP, Superintendent***



**E-Comm 9-1-1 call-takers' top five tips**

- 1 Know when to make the call
- 2 Know your location
- 3 Be prepared to answer questions
- 4 Lock and store your phone carefully
- 5 If you accidentally dial 9-1-1 stay on the line



*E-Comm staff donated 1,082 items, surpassing the original goal of 911, to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society.*

A series of short videos featuring E-Comm call-takers and dispatchers were created to help explain top tips for using 9-1-1 and were shared with the public via social media on E-Comm's YouTube channel, Twitter account and Facebook page. Visit: [youtube.com/user/911EComm](https://www.youtube.com/user/911EComm).

As part of the week's celebrations, E-Comm also organized its second annual food drive for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society to give back to the many communities staff live in and provide services to. By the end of the week donations totalled 1,082 items and surpassed the original goal of 911.

E-Comm staff appreciated the many letters from partner agencies that were received during the week, highlighting the value they bring to supporting emergency responders.

***"We are proud partners of the E-Comm service providers and wish to support with great enthusiasm the Emergency Service Dispatchers' and 9-1-1 Awareness Week in British Columbia."***

***Remo Faedo,  
Port Moody Fire Rescue, Fire Chief***



# 9-1-1 pocket dial campaign

## *“lock and store cellphones carefully”*



*The culprits in your purse and pockets cause hundreds of accidental 9-1-1 calls every day.*

E-Comm’s recent public education campaign aimed to draw attention to the approximately 200 accidental calls to 9-1-1 the organization receives every day, many of them “pocket dials” from cellphones. These calls have the largest potential to impact 9-1-1 efficiency, consuming resources that could otherwise be available to help people with real emergencies.

The six-week campaign launched March 3, and was centered around a whimsical 60-second animated video depicting the “culprits” responsible for dialing 9-1-1 accidentally and what the public can do to help protect their phones.

Directed at cellphone users, the campaign’s main message (estimated to have been seen 9.8 million times) was that “your phone doesn’t stand a chance without you” and asks the public to lock and store their cellphones carefully. The message was promoted through social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, as well as in movie theatre lobbies, restaurants and bars.

**“The time spent in managing pocket dials is a huge resource drain on 9-1-1 systems everywhere.”**

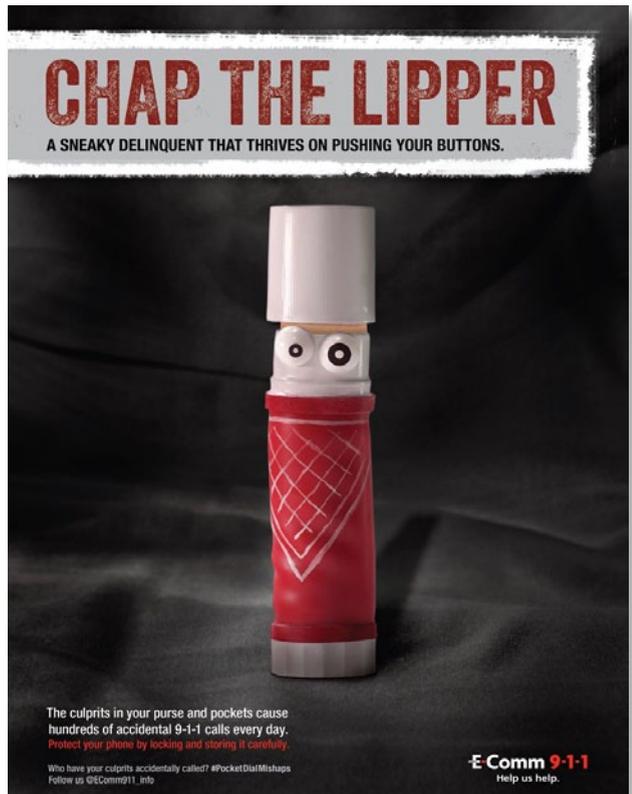
***Doug Watson, E-Comm’s Vice-President of Operations***

Of the 861,000 emergency 9-1-1 calls to E-Comm in 2013, 65% came from cellphones. The problem of pocket dials from cellphones—the single largest unnecessary drain on valuable 9-1-1 resources—prompted E-Comm to seek the public’s help in avoiding these calls, which can consume up to 10 hours a day for staff to handle.

“Every accidental call must be treated as a legitimate call until the call-taker can determine otherwise,” says Doug Watson, E-Comm’s vice-president of Operations. “Some pocket dials are obvious—our staff hear music playing, party sounds, sporting events and so on when they take the call. However, our staff still have to take time to listen, make call backs and if they have any cause for concern, take action to try to locate the caller and dispatch police. The time spent in managing these calls is a huge resource drain on 9-1-1 systems everywhere.”

The animated videos (there is both a 15- and 60-second version) have been viewed 214,000 times so far and can be watched on E-Comm’s YouTube channel found at [youtube.com/user/911EComm](https://www.youtube.com/user/911EComm).

E-Comm advises that if anyone calls 9-1-1 by accident and is aware they have done so, to stay on the line and tell the call-taker it was an accidental call. Hanging up compounds the issue. More information on how to avoid accidental calls can be found at [ecom911.ca](http://ecom911.ca).



# Canada's policing community looks to the future



*E-Comm's Vice-President of Technology Services Mike Webb presents at the CACP workshop.*

Representatives from Canada's policing community gathered in Vancouver from February 24-26 for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) Information & Communications Technology Workshop. The theme for this year's workshop was *Information Management: a critical success factor in the economies of policing*. Attendees included delegates from police, justice, law enforcement agencies, public-safety providers including E-Comm, government agencies and industry representatives.

The current and future challenges impacting the public safety industry were examined in a number of presentations and breakout session discussions, aimed at understanding information management and the critical role it plays in law enforcement. The agenda also featured discussions on innovative ways to capitalize on communications technology as a means of maximizing service delivery, growing and expanding upon existing partnerships and a close look at emerging technologies directly related to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1).

Highlights from the conference included a thought-provoking presentation on NG9-1-1 technologies such as text, photos or video to 9-1-1 by APCO International President Terry Hall. Representatives from Toronto Police Service and Victoria Police Department provided an engaging look at the different ways their departments are leveraging social media to enhance policing services through community engagement. Sean Stephenson from the Calgary Police Service also provided an overview of the role of social media in his agency's overall response during the disastrous flooding of Calgary's Bow and Elbow rivers in 2013.

E-Comm's Vice-President of Technology Services Mike Webb and Fire Applications & GIS Manager Rob Darts delivered overviews of the 700 MHz broadband spectrum and location-based technologies for public-safety organizations, while Naomi Arita, E-Comm Service Delivery manager 9-1-1 & Technology, facilitated a technical session on NG9-1-1 that looked closely at how system changes are currently being delivered as well as future capabilities such as improved wireless call location data and the transition to Internet Protocol data communications for 9-1-1 service delivery.

For more information visit [cacp.ca](http://cacp.ca).

# E-Comm in the Community

## Vancouver Chinese New Year Parade



*On February 2 E-Comm marched in Vancouver's 2014 Chinese New Year Parade through historic Chinatown.*

## St. Patrick's Day Parade



*ALI joined our Vancouver Police Partners for the 2014 St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 16.*

## Pink Shirt Day



*E-Comm supported the Pink Shirt Anti-Bullying campaign by wearing pink on February 26.*

## Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade



*ALI marched alongside our Vancouver Police Department partners in the 2014 Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade on April 12.*

# E-Comm service by the numbers

January - March 2014

## 9-1-1 service levels

9-1-1 calls placed to E-Comm	Service level*
198,415	97%

\* Service Level Target: 95% of all 9-1-1 calls answered in five seconds or less.

## Number of 9-1-1 calls from landlines and cellphones

Landline	Cellular
70,404	129,625
35%	65%

## 9-1-1 calls directed to police, fire and ambulance

Police

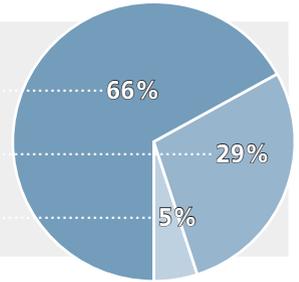
66%

Ambulance

29%

Fire

5%



## Technology

9-1-1 availability: 100%

## System availability

System air time (seconds)	Transmissions (#)	System availability average
124,132,806	32,343,643	99.9938%

## E-Comm mission

To deliver exceptional emergency communication services that help save lives and protect property, and to advance public-safety partnerships.

## E-Comm vision

Safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public-safety communication.

## E-Comm values

Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, Collaboration

# E-Comm 9-1-1

Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

This newsletter is produced by E-Comm Corporate Communications.  
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