Wireless 9-1-1 Facts

Project LOCATE (APCO Project 38)
(Locate Our Citizens At Time of Emergencies)

- An estimated 110 million wireless phone today are capable of dialing 9-1-1 to report an emergency, and today we have no means of locating the caller if they are unable to convey the information.

- Over 90% of the telephone network is still analog[1]

- 190 million calls to 911 each year[1]
    - 26.5% of those calls are made from wireless phones
    - 97.8% of the US is covered by 9-1-1 support
    - 231 counties without 911 coverage (6% of US land)

- Project LOCATE is designed to encourage the PSAPs to request Phase II of wireless 9-1-1 service from the wireless carriers operating in their area, and for the PSAPs to be ready to accept and utilize the data.

- There are an estimated 6,500 PSAPs operating in the United States.

    - 97,000 personnel employed by 911 systems or agencies[1]

- The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) has passed a resolution supporting the efforts of APCO in Project LOCATE.

- APCO has worked with all public safety organizations to encourage the widespread implementation of wireless 9-1-1, and with the FCC to require that the carriers offer this desperately needed service.

- APCO expects all parties to meet the FCC requirements and deadlines, providing this needed service to the general public.

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has set a deadline for cellular carriers to comply with its mandate that location information on wireless enhanced 9-1-1 calls be available to emergency communications centers by fall of 2001, even if the states in which they operate do not have any cost-recovery mechanism in place to cover the expense of implementing the technology. Achieving this goal is no easy task and requires the collaboration and cooperation of cellular carriers, manufacturers, public safety communications agencies, state and local governments. This is the primary reason we are here today.

- It is the position of APCO International that a dire need exists for the rapid implementation of wireless enhanced 9-1-1 technology. Location identification technology is now available, however, the wireless industry has been slow to develop and implement it. To help assist with wireless enhanced 9-1-1 implementation, APCO initiated Project 38 that will help the nation's PSAPs request Phase II services from cellular carriers.

[1] NENA Report Card to the Nation, presented to congress on September 11, 2001

- Location identification technology is now available; but implementation has been slow, partly due to carrier reluctance, lack of funding and lack of individual state wireless enhanced 9-1-1 legislation. The Federal Communications Commission has adopted rules that require wireless carriers to provide PSAPs with location information. Phase I of the rules requires provision of cell site location and callback numbers. Phase II requires more accurate location information.

- The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO) has been pushing for this technology implementation since 1992.

- APCO, NENA and NASNA have suggested to the FCC that it issue a ruling that, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, wireless carriers should be responsible for network and database enhancements up to and including the interface with the selective router. PSAPs or 9-1-1 authorities should be responsible for network and database elements from the selective router to and within the PSAP. Thus, for example, the following costs should be the responsibility of wireless carriers: [2]

  Switch upgrades • Network expenses from the MSC to your selective router • Charges for database creation and maintenance • Charges from third-party database companies • Costs of location equipment and/or handset upgrades

  In contrast, the following costs may be the responsibility of PSAPs:

  • Equipment upgrades in your PSAPs • Software upgrades in your PSAPs • Software upgrades within your LECs for passing and displaying the wireless data • Mapping computers, mapping software, development of a map base and data interfaces to your CAD and 9-1-1 equipment • Network upgrades from your selective router (tandem switch) to your PSAPs

- Carriers filed reports with the FCC on Nov. 9 providing information regarding their choices of technologies to comply with the FCC mandate, known as Phase II. APCO President Lyle Gallagher stated, "APCO is pleased that some carriers, such as Sprint and Cingular, have completed extensive technology testing and made detailed technology selections. On the other hand, APCO is dismayed that a major carrier such as AT&T Wireless failed to make any technology choice, in apparent defiance of the FCC's rules." Many carriers, especially some of the smaller carriers, also provided very cursory information, raising questions for Gallagher as to their commitment to meet the commission's requirements.

- The Project Locate committee plans to help PSAPs ready themselves to receive wireless E9-1-1 technology so they may identify the exact location of emergency calls made from wireless phones (in accordance with FCC docket 94-102 Phase II). PSAPs must obtain the appropriate equipment and make requests to wireless carriers for Phase II services. However, implementation has been slow, partly due to carrier reluctance, lack of funding and lack of individual state wireless E9-1-1 legislation.

  The committee will work with PSAPs, carriers, local and state governments as well as the FCC in achieving this goal. Committee members, along with APCO staff, will compile information on each state's wireless E9-1-1 status, e.g., absence or presence of legislation, funding or a statewide 9-1-1 authority. It will identify carriers' status of wireless Phase II technology, and it will identify the needs of individual PSAPs.

[2] King County Request, with the FCC ruling as requested by public safety on May 7, 2001