



Kane County Emergency Telephone System Board

ETSB

The Kane County Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) was established in 1989 after the voters of Kane County passed a referendum to establish an enhanced 9-1-1 telephone system. Created under Illinois Statutes, Kane County Ordinance, and certified to operate by the Illinois Commerce Commission (now under the Illinois State Police), beginning on September 11, 1991 the Kane County E9-1-1 System went "live" with its enhanced 9-1-1 system. The Kane County E9-1-1 System serves all of Kane County with the exception of the City of Aurora, Village of North Aurora, Village of Montgomery, City of Elgin, Village of Carpentersville, Village of East Dundee, Village of West Dundee, Village of Sleepy Hollow, Village of Barrington Hills, Village of Algonquin, and Village of Huntley.

A PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) is the location where telecommunicators (call-takers/dispatchers) answer 9-1-1 calls and dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical services. The Kane County ETSB oversees the 9-1-1 system operating at the Kane Comm Dispatch Center located in Geneva, and the Tri-Com Central Dispatch Center located in St. Charles.

Starting in 1976, prior to the 1989 referendum date, the county and some municipalities operated what was known as a basic 9-1-1 system. While a 9-1-1 call came into a dispatch center on a dedicated line, there was no information attached to the call to determine who the caller was or where it originated. Attempts to trace a basic 9-1-1 call could often take hours. Some municipalities in the county did not have a 9-1-1 system until 1990 and therefore had to rely on seven digit telephone numbers for the public to request law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services.

The enhanced 9-1-1 system implemented in 1991 replaced the basic 9-1-1 systems. It allowed all 9-1-1 calls to be directed to the dispatch center responsible for dispatching the police, fire and emergency medical services to that specific address. All enhanced 9-1-1 calls provide the answering telecommunicator with the name and address of the caller registered to that address along with the correct law enforcement, fire, and EMS ambulance to dispatch to that address. Information that used to take hours to trace is now available the very instant a 9-1-1 call is received.

In 1994, the Kane County Emergency Telephone System began taking limited wireless Phase 1 9-1-1 calls from cellular telephones. Kane County was one of the first E9-1-1 systems in Illinois to take emergency calls from cell phones. Prior to this date wireless 9-1-1 callers had to dial one of many different seven digit numbers in order to receive emergency assistance and no information on the calling party or their location was available to the answering telecommunicator. As of 2005, all wireless carriers in Kane County are providing Phase 2 wireless 9-1-1 service which allows the telecommunicator not only to receive the callback number for the caller but also the latitude and longitude location where the call was made. From the lat/long an actual street address can be generated and displayed on a street map. While in the infancy of the cell phone industry the number of 9-1-1 calls coming from cell phones was very low, today the number of cell phone 9-1-1 calls far exceed the number of calls coming from wireline (landline) telephones (85% cellular to 15% landline).

In 2009 the Kane County Emergency Telephone System began to accept Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone calls with these services being delivered via the Internet. This new service provided many challenges because the 9-1-1 call was being delivered using the Internet instead of the traditional public switched telephone network. Accuracy of location information is diminished unless the address data for the phone is maintained by the telephone owner. It is absolutely imperative VOIP owners keep their physical VOIP address up to date or call routing and incorrect call locations may occur.

In 2013 Kane County ETSB PSAPs began to accept text messages to 9-1-1 from cellular telephones. This new service allows a caller to reach and request an emergency response without actually having to talk with a telecommunicator. Texting can allow a caller to stay safe while requesting help when using a voice may present a danger to the caller, such as when being threatened by an intruder or during a domestic situation. While it is always better to voice call 9-1-1 in an emergency, when that is not possible, text to 9-1-1 is monitored and is operational in Kane County.

What does the future hold for 9-1-1? The Kane County Emergency Telephone Board is working alongside all 117 PSAPs in the State of Illinois implementing Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) services. In 2022-23 the entire 9-1-1 system statewide is being completely overhauled to deliver 9-1-1 calls to all the PSAPs via the Internet instead of the traditional public switched telephone network. The routing of 9-1-1 calls is changing to using geographical locations using GIS technology instead of by traditional fixed postal street addresses. This improved method of call delivery will enhance the capability of delivering a 9-1-1 call to the correct PSAP for dispatch, especially for wireless devices that are not attached to a fixed location. In addition to many other additional enhancements the new NG9-1-1 service also allows for callers to send video messages and pictures to the 9-1-1 PSAP. Both KaneComm and Tri-Com transitioned to NG9-1-1 in September of 2022 with the rest of the state expected to implement the service by the end of 2023. Technology changes very rapidly these days, so whatever the future holds, the Kane County Emergency Telephone System Board is prepared to step up and meet the challenges inherent with the need to deliver fast, clear, accurate, and efficient 9-1-1 emergency services to the citizens of Kane County that it serves.