



Public Alert: Can Help Find You When You Call 9-1-1?

Consumers who are considering buying or have already purchased Internet-based telephone service should be aware of certain technical 9-1-1 limitations. Voice over Internet Protocol (**VoIP**) is a telephone service that connects calls to the Internet as a means of communicating with other phones.

The traditional 9-1-1 system which is based on the use of landlines, provides that your emergency call will go to the correct 9-1-1 Centre. At the same time it will provide automatic address and telephone number information to ensure help will find you even if you are not able to verbalize your location or nature of the emergency. This is known as Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1). This is not guaranteed with new Internet-based telephone technology.

The Ontario 9-1-1 Advisory Board would like to alert the public to some of the technical 9-1-1 related limitations of VoIP services during an emergency:

VoIP has two types of telephone services: *Nomadic* (no fixed address) and *Non-nomadic* (having a fixed address linked to the telephone).

- Nomadic phones calling 9-1-1 must connect to the VoIP service provider's call centre (possibly located in a different city or country) and the call centre must then re-direct it to the appropriate 9-1-1 Centre.
- The VoIP service provider's call centre may be sending your emergency call to a non-emergency telephone number.
- This will result in delays, which could mean the difference between life and death in an emergency.
- Also, if a caller is non-verbal or if the call is disconnected, the call centre may not be able to determine the address of the emergency.
- When using nomadic VoIP services automatic location information is not provided to the 9-1-1 Centre.
- 9-1-1 Service is not available if your Internet connection is down.
- 9-1-1 Service is not available if there is a power failure.

Public safety is a priority to the Ontario 9-1-1 Advisory Board and encourages consumers who are considering buying or have already purchased Internet-based telephone service to be aware of certain technical 9-1-1 limitations. Consumers should contact their VoIP telephone service providers to clarify the options and restrictions of their products pertaining to access to 9-1-1.

For further information on the Ontario 9-1-1 Advisory Board go to: www.oab911.ca