



NEWS

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FCC CHAIRMAN MICHAEL K. POWELL ISSUES “WIRELESS E911 CALL TO ACTION”

Calls Upon Governors to Aid in Deployment Urges Consumers to Know the Facts on Deployment in Their Area

Washington, D.C. – FCC Chairman Michael Powell today issued a “call to action” to state governors and state and local public safety officials to join the FCC in ensuring that emergency call centers can identify the locations of people making 911 emergency calls from wireless phones.

In a speech today before the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials (APCO) International, Inc., Chairman Powell said, “We know that wireless enhanced 911 technology works – and can save lives.”

Powell said, “Government cannot be a passive observer in the roll-out of E911, we must be an active participant.” Powell said that E911 progress requires that “carriers, public safety officials, ILECS, equipment vendors and state and local governments must be full partners with the FCC.”

Powell also called on consumers to play a “central role” in demanding E911 services for their wireless phones. He said, “When consumers buy wireless phones, they shouldn’t just ask about the price. They need to ask carriers ‘Do you provide E911 Phase II capability? How accurate is the E911 capability in this handset? What is your deployment schedule in my area?’”

Powell warned that the FCC will not hesitate to take strong enforcement actions, including substantial fines and imposition of binding deployment schedules, against wireless carriers who delay deployment of wireless E911 services to their customers without adequate justification.

Powell said he had invited gubernatorial and tribal Representatives to attend a meeting of the FCC's E911 Coordination Initiative on October 29-30 in Washington "to tackle current deployment issues, accuracy requirements and additional public education efforts."

Studies have shown that nearly a third of 911 calls today are from wireless phone users. The FCC’s Phase I E911 rules required wireless carriers, within six months of a valid request from a public safety answering point – the 911 call center, to begin supplying to emergency

dispatchers the telephone number of a wireless 911 caller and the location of the cell site or base station transmitting the call.

The Phase II E911 rules require wireless carriers, within six months of a valid request by a PSAP, to begin providing more precise location information to emergency dispatchers, specifically, the latitude and longitude of the caller. This information must meet FCC accuracy standards – generally, it must be accurate to within 50-300 meters (depending on the type of technology used).

Powell announced that the Commission is rolling out a wireless 911 nationwide public awareness campaign emphasizing wireless E911 coordination, outreach, and education. The Commission will intensify its efforts by targeted, direct outreach to consumers and by closely coordinating with state, local and tribal governments.

Powell also announced the establishment of a wireless E911 technical subcommittee of the Commission's Network Reliability and Interoperability Council (NRIC) that will focus on network architecture and technical standards issues. In addition, the January 2004 Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be devoted to wireless E911 in an effort to shape the issues to be studied by the NRIC.

Powell linked the importance of E911 to broad homeland security concerns. He said, "Before and since September 11th, the commission has developed policies to secure our nation's telecommunications infrastructure and network reliability. Spectrum policy and homeland security are at the forefront of my strategic plan for the Commission. Central to that plan is the implementation of Enhanced 911 for wireless communications services.

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