

New York's Counties are Declaring



Mayday
for
Mandate Relief

Realign How 9-1-1 Surcharges are Collected and Allocated to Counties

Counties operate and maintain most 9-1-1 functions in the state. The funding mechanism to operate, maintain, and upgrade 911 system capability and performance is not generating enough revenue to maintain current systems and prepare to implement the next generation of 9-1-1 technology required under federal law.

The State of New York imposes a \$1.20 public safety surcharge on all wireless telephones in order to fund 9-1-1 operations, and help first responders and law enforcement communicate and respond to emergencies. Last year, the state collected \$185 million and provided only \$75 million in grants to counties for 9-1-1 services.

Current hardware and software in many local 9-1-1 systems is reaching the end of its useful life and must be upgraded and/or replaced. In addition, the Federal government is requiring states to build next generation 9-1-1 systems that have the capability and flexibility to receive information from a variety of electronic devices in various forms. This upgrade is expected to cost billions of dollars in New York State in the coming years.

1. Apply the state and local surcharge to all devices that connect to 9-1-1.

The current surcharge is only applied to contract cell phones, and exempts pre-paid wireless phones. Over the years, trends in the cellular market have shifted and the majority of cellular network providers have moved away from long term contracts. The State's revenue from this surcharge has plateaued while the number of cellular devices capable of accessing 911 systems continues to grow. If all cell phone users pay the 9-1-1 surcharge, the state's revenue would increase, which would provide additional grant funding to counties to help offset the costs of upgrading our 911 services.

2. Authorize all counties to charge a local surcharge

As of September 2014, all but eight counties have the authority to charge a separate local surcharge of at least \$.30 per wireless phone for E-911 services. This inequity prevents the remaining eight counties (Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, Niagara, Oneida, Oswego, Schoharie, and St. Lawrence) from implementing this surcharge. This local surcharge should be applied evenly across the state and to all user devices, including pre-paid phones.