NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Brittany Kershaw; (386) 586-2637; bkershaw@flaglersheriff.com

Text to 911 is Now Available in Flagler County

Flagler County Board of County Commissioners and the Flagler County Sheriff's Office are proud to announce that Text to 911 is now available in Flagler County. Text-to-911 refers to the ability to send text messages to local 911 call centers during an emergency.

Texting in an emergency may be beneficial for people who have trouble hearing or speaking, or if a voice call is not a viable option. Users must have a cell phone data plan that allows texting.

"We are excited to have this new technology in Flagler County and we know that it will save lives," said Sheriff Rick Staly. "We always want callers to call 911 in an emergency if possible. If calling 911 will put you in danger or if you have difficulty hearing or speaking, texting 911 is now an option. Remember to CALL when you can, TEXT when you can't."

HOW TO TEXT 911 IN AN EMERGENCY

- Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field.
- Include the location of the emergency.
- Include the type of help needed: Law Enforcement, Medical, Fire.
- Answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker.
- Text in simple words – do not use abbreviations.
- Keep text messages brief and concise.

Text to 911 is easy to use. When creating a new message, type 911 with no spaces or dashes in the "To" field. In the body of the message, type the exact location or provide a nearby intersection or landmark. Never use abbreviations, slang, emojis or attempt to send pictures or videos when using Text to 911. Also be sure to include the type of emergency, as Text to 911 is for police, fire or emergency medical services. Dispatch will respond to the message within seconds. If Text to 911 is not available in your area, you will receive a response alerting you to call 911.

"Text to 911 is a feature that is still not functional in many parts of the country," Flagler County Innovation Technology Director and 911 Coordinator Jarrod Shupe said. "This new technology has advanced the Flagler County Emergency Communications Center's ability to provide service to the community and to our first responders. We are pleased that we can offer better technology to serve the residents and visitors of Flagler County."

Communicating with 911 dispatchers by voice is more effective than Text to 911. Text to 911 should only be used for a true emergency. Calling or texting 911 when it is not an emergency is a crime.

Please view the introduction video for Text to 911 in Flagler County at this link: https://youtu.be/Qi3YHnT9Hlg or on the FCSO Facebook page: www.facebook.com/flaglercounty.sheriffsoffice

The FCSO Communications Center is a state-of-the art facility that was recently renovated with twelve new console stations and new computers. Six of the original consoles were moved to the backup PSAP. New Solacom Guardian 911 Phone Systems, GPS Netclock, and Equature logging recorders for radio/phones were installed at both the Primary and the Backup PSAP. A fiber optic cable connectivity was also installed between the Primary and the Backup PSAP. The improvements were possible due to a $477,000.00 grant received by the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners.

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