

Report Concludes 9-1-1 in a State Of Emergency

TracFone Wireless Phones strain Alabama's 9-1-1 Network

The Alabama Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association met in Birmingham on January 22, 2009 to discuss the burden of prepaid phones to the State's 9-1-1 Emergency Network

Birmingham, AL (January 22, 2009) – During a meeting of Alabama's 9-1-1 directors from across the state the issue of prepaid phones was discussed and options to help educate the public on these devices.

Prepaid phones are bought at many retailers across the state of Alabama. These new devices do not require a credit score, contract or registration to qualify for service.

The issues discussed at the meeting were:

- TracFone wireless phones do not remit 9-1-1 surcharges like all other phones used in the State, in accordance with State Law. This is causing a significant drain on 9-1-1 resources and the ability to take calls from the public in emergencies from these fast growing devices.
- Prepaid phones are four times as likely to call 9-1-1, yet the caller cannot be identified and in many cases located.
- Prepaid phones generate an inordinate amount of false / hoax calls to 9-1-1 tying up dispatchers and delaying responses to legitimate issues.

"Companies supplying these devices to the public should be treated the same as every other telecommunications provider in Alabama," stated John Ellison Director of 9-1-1 service in Shelby County. Currently, by not paying the 9-1-1 surcharge properly, it gives these companies an unfair advantage and strains the emergency network that these devices connect to. Rod Coleman, President of the Alabama Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association stated, "All we are asking of TracFone is to simply remit the 9-1-1 surcharge as required by Alabama state law as other wireless providers currently do."

The group is calling for the State legislature to enforce treating all telecommunication devices that require service from 9-1-1 the same.

###