



## New Ten-Digit Numbering and Emergency Call Handling Procedures for Internet-Based Telecommunications Relay Services

Since December 31, 2008 persons with hearing and speech disabilities using Video Relay Service (VRS) or Internet Protocol Relay (IP Relay) – two forms of Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) – have been able to obtain ten-digit telephone numbers. This ten-digit number requirement was adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in conjunction with 911 call handling requirements for VRS and IP-Relay providers.

TRS calls made through the traditional telephone network automatically pass along to the called party signals that help identify the caller's location. As a result, relay providers will know the caller's location, and can therefore route the call to the appropriate emergency personnel to respond. This routing was not previously possible with Internet-based forms of TRS, because calls did not pass along location information. The new FCC rules address this situation by requiring VRS and IP Relay providers to obtain location information from relay users who have obtained ten-digit telephone numbers. The new rules ensure that VRS and IP Relay users are provided 911 service that is comparable to the 911 service provided to traditional telephone users.

### What is Internet-Based TRS?

TRS permits a person with a hearing or a speech disability to access the telephone system to call voice telephone users. For example, a TRS



user "calls" a relay provider through a TTY, text telephone or similar text-based device and is connected to a communications assistant (CA) who, in turn, makes a voice telephone call to the person the TRS user wishes to call. The CA then speaks to the called party what the relay user has typed, and types back to the relay user what the called party says. In this way, the CA "relays" the call back and forth between the two parties.

With Internet-based TRS, calls are made via the Internet and an IP-enabled device, rather than the telephone network. The two most commonly used forms of Internet-based TRS are VRS and IP Relay. A third type of Internet-based TRS, IP Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS), is not subject to the new ten-digit numbering and requirements.

**VRS** – This Internet-based form of TRS allows persons whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with the CA in ASL using video conferencing

equipment and a broadband Internet connection. The CA speaks what is signed to the called party, and signs the called party's response back to the caller. For more information about VRS visit: [www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/videorelay.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/videorelay.html).

**IP Relay** – IP Relay allows a person to communicate in text using an IP-enabled device (such as a personal computer) and the Internet, rather than a TTY and the public switched telephone network. For more information about IP Relay visit: [www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/iprelay.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/iprelay.html).

**IP CTS** – IP CTS allows a person who can speak and who has some residual hearing to simultaneously listen to what is said over the telephone and read captions of what the other person is saying. An Internet connection carries the captions between the relay provider and the user. For more information about IP CTS visit: [www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/ipcaptioned.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/ipcaptioned.html).

### Benefits of Ten-Digit Numbers

Since December 31, 2008, VRS and IP Relay users have been able to obtain ten-digit telephone numbers by registering with a VRS or IP Relay provider (their "default" provider). With a ten-digit number, VRS and IP Relay users are able to:

- Make an emergency call through their preferred VRS or IP Relay provider and have the call, along with the ten-digit number and location information, automatically route

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# Clarke's Column

by Clarke Christianson

Every year, I, along with the staff and Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program specialists from different CSD branch offices (Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Aberdeen) continue to promote Relay South Dakota and the TEDP at different events, conferences, fairs and similar gatherings. Although we attend at many of the same events every year, there are always new people of all ages who have been diagnosed with various degrees of hearing loss coming to us for services. The TRS Fund, in accordance with South Dakota Codified Law 49-31-53, is created from the collection of a surcharge on each wired and wireless telephone line (\$.15 per line

per month). The TRS Fund makes it possible for the operation of relay services and distribution of specialized telecommunications equipment so that SD people with a hearing loss are able to have full telephone accessibility.

To learn more about our services, you can contact us using the information as shown in this newsletter or go into the website [www.sdrelay.com](http://www.sdrelay.com).

We will be continuing to do booth exhibitions and presentations throughout the state, so if you happen to be in the area, please feel free to stop by and visit with us. The tentative schedule and locations are:

March 7	Health Fair in Britton – Hecla
March 26	Presentation at Sturgis Senior Center in Sturgis
April 19–21	Technology & Innovation in Education Conference in Rapid City
April 22	Meade County Health Fair
May 2	Health/Human Services Fair in Rapid City
May 7	Active Living Expo in Sioux Falls
July 31	August 2 – Oglala Nation Pow Wow in Pine Ridge
August 17–24	Brown County Fair in Aberdeen
September 3–7	SD State Fair in Huron

## Ten-Digits, continued from page 1

to the appropriate public safety answering point, or “911 call center”, so that emergency personnel can be dispatched.

• Receive calls from voice telephone users calling the ten-digit number assigned to the VRS or IP Relay user. (The caller does not need to know the VRS or IP Relay user’s IP address to make the call.)

• Make a call directly to, or receive a call directly from, another person using VRS or IP Relay equipment by dialing a ten-digit number.

VRS or IP Relay users are able to change default relay providers at any time but still keep the same telephone number. Providers cannot impose any restrictions or conditions when users request that their number be ported to a new default provider. For more information on local number portability, see the FCC’s consumer fact sheet at [www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/numbport.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/numbport.html). In addition, consumers can place a call through any provider (such as a provider other than the default provider) by clicking on the URL or address of the other provider. Hearing callers may also place a call with another provider (other than the



default provider) by dialing the 800 number of the provider they wish to handle their call.

## New Emergency Call Handling Procedures

The FCC’s new rules require VRS and IP Relay providers to:

- Obtain from their users the physical location at which the service will first be used when the users register for ten-digit numbers;
- Give users an easy way to update their location information if it changes, without cost or additional equipment;
- Route all emergency calls to the appropriate 911 call center and transmit the call-back number and registered location of the caller, the name of the VRS or IP Relay provider, and the identification number of the VRS or IP Relay provider’s CA;

• Publish a summary of these new procedures, emphasizing the need to keep location information updated, on their Web sites and in any promotional materials addressing emergency call handling; and

• Obtain and keep records of affirmative acknowledgement from their registered users that they have received and understood the provider’s summary.

## Emergency Calling Tips for VRS and IP Relay Users

• Make sure you are familiar with your provider’s procedures for updating your registered physical location, and promptly update the information if it changes.

• Know any limitations of your service, and have a plan for making emergency calls in the event of a power or Internet outage. You may want to keep a TTY and a traditional phone line, or install a backup power supply. Dialing 911 from a TTY or traditional phone remains the most reliable and fastest method of reaching emergency personnel.

• Inform children, babysitters, and visitors about using your TRS service and the limitations, if any, on placing emergency calls.

# CSD Launches Nationwide Call Center and Web Site to Assist Deaf/Hard of Hearing With DTV Transition

## DTV DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION

Information for Deaf,  
Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind



*Are you  
connected?*

<http://dtv.c-s-d.org>

**Voice: 877-dtv-4you**

(877-488-4968)

**TTY: 877-tty-4csd**

(877-880-4273)

### Direct Videophone Numbers

**866-351-1950**

**866-401-3519**

### Direct Videophone IP Addresses

**DTV03.CSD.TV**

**DTV04.CSD.TV**

**DTV05.CSD.TV**

**DTV06.CSD.TV**

AIM

**dtvcsr07; dtvcsr08**



With nearly six percent of the nation's households unready for analog to digital television transition, CSD will focus on an awareness campaign for deaf and hard of hearing viewers.

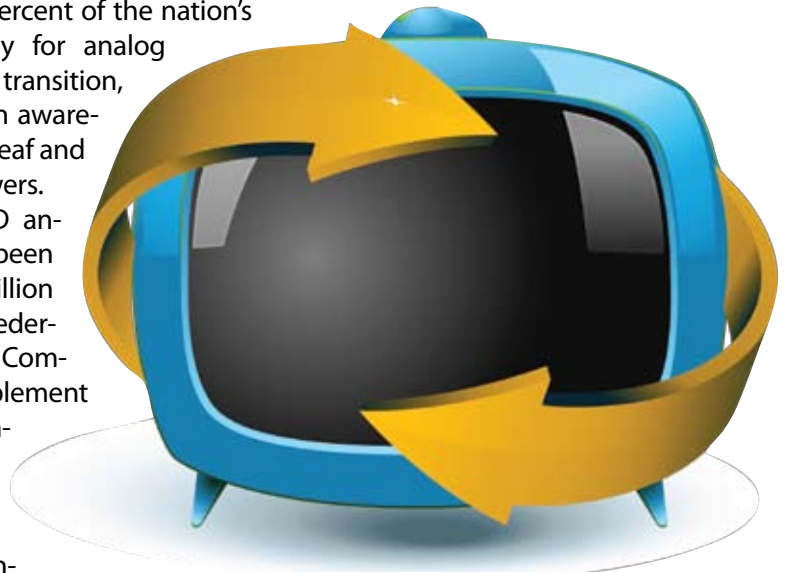
In January, CSD announced that it had been awarded a \$1.1 million contract from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to implement an awareness campaign targeted at the nation's deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind consumers in regards to the digital TV (DTV) transition. Recently, Congress passed the bill to delay the deadline from to June 12, giving those Americans still on the waiting list for converter box coupons (currently 3.2 million) and those needing technical assistance a reprieve. CSD has launched both a Help Center (call center) and a new Web site — with "how to" videos in American Sign Language (ASL), captioning and voice for hard of hearing people, and Spanish (captioned and voiced) — to provide that much-needed support today.

As part of the grassroots educational awareness campaign, CSD is creating and releasing deaf-oriented PSAs, disseminating educational materials, answering calls from an established call center, helping viewers get and install converter boxes, educating consumers about the use of DTV closed captioning services, providing technical assistance, and more. CSD is also working with deaf and hard of hearing organizations like the National Association of the Deaf and the Hearing Loss Association of America to act as an outreach resource in steering consumers with questions to CSD's Help Center.

The Help Center is unlike any other call center in the nation. CSD was chosen by the FCC, in part, because of their expertise in the call center industry (prior Glob-

al Call Center of the Year award winner), and, because of their history of working with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. This innovative call center can receive traditional phone calls, and also TTY, relay, video relay, videophone, and CapTel calls. This means that regardless of the level of hearing loss, the Help Center is equipped to handle any call preference. The Help Center customer support staff consists of both hearing people and those fluent in ASL. Meaning, if a deaf person prefers to "see" and use sign language via videophone to receive customer support, that option is available. Besides phone calls, the Help Center can also answer questions via Instant Message and e-mail.

The new Web site is a quick resource for those needing answers to questions such as "do I need a converter box and how can I get one?" and like the Help Center, the information is accessible in the visitor's preferred mode. ASL users will find answers in short ASL videos. Those with a partial hearing loss who don't use sign language can see videos complete with audio and captioning and without ASL. Spanish-speaking deaf can find videos both with Spanish captions and voice. Visitors can also find e-mail contacts and Help Center phone numbers, all on the CSD-DTV site, at <http://dtv.c-s-d.org>.





102 N. Krohn Place  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# Your feedback is important to us!

Did you just have a successful relay call and the CA did a fabulous job?

Did you have some challenges during a relay call and you feel that the CA might benefit from your feedback?

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are extremely valuable to us, as they help ensure the quality of the relay services we offer to you. Not only that, positive feedback means the whole world to a CA and brightens up their day! Even your feedback to help a CA improve for the next relay calls will be greatly appreciated. By providing specific infor-



mation using the example below, you will help us provide continuous training and specific feedback to our CAs.

**Date of Relay Call:** February 9, 2009

**Time of Relay Call:** 9:15 a.m. (Central time)

**CA ID Number:** CA 1234(F)

**Comments:** (be specific). This CA did a wonderful job relaying my call. She typed with no spelling errors, and typed efficiently and smoothly with a great positive attitude. My hearing friend felt like she was talking directly to me. Keep up the great work!

**Please send your comments to:**

Clarke Christianson  
South Dakota TRS Outreach Manager  
102 N. Krohn Place  
Sioux Falls, SD 57103

or email:

**cchristianson@c-s-d.org**

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[www.sdrelay.com](http://www.sdrelay.com)