



Access For 911, Enhanced 911 and Telephone Emergency Services

By Clarke Christianson

The most familiar and effective way Americans get help in an emergency is to dial 911. For people with disabilities the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to provide direct, equal access to telephone emergency services for people using TTYs. Telephone emergency services apply to basic emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance.

How Does TTY Access Work for 9-1-1?

One option, when using landline phone, is to dial 911 directly with a TTY, and a connection will be made with the 911 center. The phone will be silent, which is called a "silent off-the-hook" call. The 911 dispatcher will see your telephone number being displayed along with name, street address, city and state on the screen. Then the dispatcher will send assistance to your location quickly without asking any questions.

Some PSAPs have their own TTYs or TTY-compatible equipment set up at 911 centers to connect with TTY calls directly. This system should handle TTY calls as properly, promptly and reliably as voice calls.

Another way—not recommended and takes a little while longer, but still works—is to dial 711 using the TTY to contact the telecommunications relay services (TRS) center. The communication assistant (CA) needs to get complete contact information from you. Then the CA will forward your call to the 911 dispatcher who will process the emergency call and send the appropriate emergency personnel.

In the last few years, consumers have



switched to Internet-based communication services. Many have stopped using TTYs or phone services and thus have no access to 911 call centers.

Accessibility of Enhanced 911 Services

Making 911 calls through Internet-based communication services is different than using a landline phone. Internet-based relay services are video relay services (VRS) and Internet protocol (IP) relay services. Consumers use computer, video conferencing software/hardware or wireless devices such as pagers. Currently, different VRS providers and IP relay providers have their own access procedures for consumers to use to make 911 emergency calls. For instance, CSD-VRS can be reached through 911VRS.tv. When a person connects to 911VRS.tv the interpreter will answer and the caller will be asked to give name, address, location of emergency and nature of emergency. Then the interpreter will contact the 911 emergency center in this caller's area and relay the information.

For Sprint IP relay service, consumers can go to www.sprintip.com through a computer, and mobile device such as Smartphones, pagers, or PDAs when making 911 emergency calls. When the CA at the relay center receives the emergency call, the CA will ask for contact

information (name, location and phone number) so that the call will be routed to the correct 911 emergency center in the caller's area.

For CapTel users, there are two procedures to dial 911 emergency calls. One is to dial directly to Emergency 911 Services. The caller picks up the CapTel handset and dials 911. The light above the CAPTIONS button will go off and the display will show *CAPTIONS ARE OFF* Dialing 911 Directly. Watch the display for instructions. The caller will hear the 911 dispatcher or see a connection made. The caller can then talk into the handset and give information about the nature of the emergency. CapTel will automatically send a text message to 911 telling them to type messages to the caller. The caller will read messages on the CapTel display and respond by talking into the handset.

Another alternative procedure is to call through a traditional relay service by picking up the CapTel handset and dialing 711. The caption light will go off and the display will show VCO Mode Dialing 711. The display will show when a connection to be made to the relay service. The caller can then ask for VCO and tell the CA that the call is an emergency and request 911. The CA will place a call to the 911 Emergency Services and transcribe everything the 911 dispatcher says into text which appears on the CapTel display. The caller talks into the CapTel handset and gives the location and nature of the emergency.

New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act Includes Accessibility

The Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT), which is
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CSD OF SIOUX FALLS WELCOMES YOU TO BUCKMASTER!

By Nikki Soukup

On Sept. 15, CSD of Sioux Falls reopened its doors at 100 N. Krohn Place after moving from its previous location at 3520 Gateway Lane. CSD of Sioux Falls has returned to its historical roots by relocating to the CSD home office campus, where CSD (also known as Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc) began over 30 years ago. CSD first opened on Nov. 1, 1975, with one office—the broom closet of the Simpson Building, formerly part of the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD).

Over the years CSD moved from one building to another, expanding offices while increasing services to meet the various needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. In 1987, CSD moved to its Gateway location and remained there until 1996. In 1996, the South Dakota Association of the Deaf (SDAD) and CSD worked together to purchase the western half of the SDSD campus. The deaf community rallied to keep this property for its valued history. The historical buildings became home once again for CSD Headquarters. CSD further expanded by incorporating Telecommunications Relay Services and eventually Video Relay Services, in addition to providing human service programs in other states across the nation. While CSD Headquarters moved to the historic SDSD campus, CSD of



Sioux Falls continued to provide human service programs at the Gateway location until September of this year.

“The move of our local Centers of Excellence (COE) branch office to our home campus headquarters is a definite advantage – for our staff, for the organization and especially for the consumers in our community,” said Ben Soukup, CEO and president of CSD. “We’ll now be able to work side by side with everyone at CSD to achieve our initiatives, and are thrilled to combine our corporate resources and synergy to create the best possible service delivery model here in the Sioux Falls area. For the past twelve years, we have separated our programs in locations throughout

the Sioux Falls area. This has had some advantage but combining our offices on one campus has far more advantages – mainly offering staff the opportunity to work with other CSD employees, lending our efforts and expertise to make CSD the best possible organization that it can be. This is why we firmly believe that the Buckmaster Building is now a fitting home for our human service program.”

When CSD first opened, services focused primarily on TTY repair and interpreting. Today, a wide array of services is provided to the deaf and hard of hearing community nationwide. In South Dakota, community services include independent living, advocacy, social and recreation, mentoring, case management, health awareness, substance abuse and the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) and many others. CSD of Sioux Falls continues to offer these services to the deaf and hard of hearing community in Sioux Falls and its surrounding areas.

The community and general public are welcome to visit CSD of Sioux Falls’ new location during its Open House on December 4th in Sioux Falls from 2-5pm. Refreshments will be provided. We hope to see you there!

The Buckmaster building is the southernmost building on the CSD Headquarters campus. It is next to East 10th Street. The human service offices and TEDP programs are on the 3rd floor, which is easily accessible by an elevator.

Bus: Route #4 – Bus stops at 10th and Jessica—walk west to CSD. Or stop at 10th and Blauvelt and walk east to CSD. Route 4 will depart and leave from the downtown transfer station every half hour during rush hour and then every hour during normal hours.

Car: From I-229: Take the E.10th Street exit. Head west until St. Paul Ave—turn Right (go North) until 8th St. Then turn Left and go west on 8th St. to N. Krohn Place. Turn Left (south) into the parking lot.

From Cliff and E. 10th: Head east to Mable Ave. Turn Left (go north) until 8th St. Then turn right and go east on 8th St. to N. Krohn Place. Turn Right (south) into the parking lot.



Benefiting from TEDP:

Cheryl from Rapid City

A CapTel Dream Come True!

By Brenda French

Twelve years ago, a deaf, independent woman named Cheryl had her first taste of telecommunication assistive devices. Cheryl was born deaf and has been reading lips and speaking all her life. Cheryl was mainstreamed in the Rapid City school district from kindergarten to high school and until 12 years ago she never used a phone. She was able to maintain communication with the hearing world with the help of her two sons, depending on them to relay information from phone calls.

In 1996, Cheryl applied for the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) and received her first TTY, a special teletype device that lets people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired use the telephone to communicate. The TTY allows users to type messages back and forth to one another instead of talking and listening. At that time, Cheryl appreciated the access to communication but didn't like to type her messages and depend on the Communication Assistant (CA) to relay her message when she knew she could use her own voice.

Then she learned about Voice Carry Over (VCO) relay. VCO relay allowed Cheryl to use her own voice on the telephone and read the other person's reply on the TTY. This required her to have a phone and a TTY. People who are hard-of-hearing, deaf or late deafened and have clear, understandable speech often use VCO.

In 1999, a new device called the Voice Carry Over phone was offered to Cheryl and it was ideal for her situation. The new device allowed her to speak and read the other person's response right on the phone. Cheryl's VCO calls were placed through Relay South Dakota. For nine years, she used Relay South Dakota and the VCO phone.

In 2008, CSD informed Cheryl of the newest communication option available in South Dakota. It was called CapTel (captioned telephone). The CapTel phone allows users to place a call in the same way as dialing a traditional phone. As they dial, the CapTel phone automatically connects to a captioning service. When the other



party answers, the CapTel phone user hears everything that they say, just like a traditional call, and the CapTel Captioning Service transcribes the caller's spoken words into written captions, which appear on the CapTel phone display without a delay. After twelve years of dreaming of a device like this her dream came true!

Cheryl said she feels more connected to the caller with CapTel and that the flow of the conversation is more natural. Her friends and family are more willing to call her now. Other advantages to the CapTel were easy access to automated phone systems, confidence that people would not hang up on her thinking she's a telemarketer, the ability to access her personal voicemails, and longer conversations because it's easier to communicate. Cheryl said, laughing, "I can finally hang up on telemarketers because I have Caller ID on my new phone!"

For more information about TEDP services and CapTel, go to www.sdrelay.com/tedp

Anyone who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Speech-disabled and needs to receive telephone services can contact the nearest CSD branch offices and the State office:

Sioux Falls Branch of CSD
100 N. Krohn Place
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
(866) 246-5759 Voice/TTY

Rapid City Branch of CSD
150 Knollwood Drive
Rapid City, SD 57701
(888) 304-2311 Voice/TTY

Aberdeen Branch of CSD
1707 4th Ave. SE
Aberdeen, SD 57401
(605) 626-2668 Voice/TTY

SD Dept. of Human Services
3800 Hwy 34 500 E. Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501
(800) 265-9684 Voice/TTY
(605) 773-3195 Voice/TTY

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made up of over 45 national, regional and community-based organizations, pushed for language to be put in the planning and developing of the access needs of persons with disabilities into the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008 (H.R. 3403). What this means is that it will make it easier for IP relay and Video Relay services providers to handle the 911 calls.

Also, beginning on Dec. 31, 2008, people with hearing and speech disabilities who use IP relay services or video relay services will be able to get 10-digit telephone numbers. The re-

quirement of the 10-digit telephone number was adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in conjunction with 911 call handling requirements for VRS and IP-relay providers. The FCC has the rules requiring VRS and IP relay providers to obtain location information from relay users having 10-digit telephone numbers and that ensures that the VRS and IP relay users are provided 911 services that are comparable to the 911 services provided to traditional telephone users. In other words, more functionally equivalent access to 911 emergency services.



102 N. Krohn Place
Sioux Falls, SD 57103

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: October 9, 2008

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