

# The Status of 9-1-1 Apps

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# Overview

- ❖ Background
  - ❖ AppComm
  - ❖ APCO's Key Attributes
- ❖ “9-1-1” Apps
- ❖ Next steps

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Device:

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### What makes an effective public safety app?

APCO's recently-released "Key Attributes of Effective Apps for Public Safety and Emergency Response" provides a list of important characteristics for the apps that appear on this site. [Read it here.](#)

### App Gallery (most recent first)



Suspicious Activity Reporting



Fire Safety Web App



Lancaster County Emergency Radio



VSee



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APCO Gov't Relations @GRO\_APCO 8 Nov  
Earlier @FCC agenda had order re reliability & resiliency of #911 networks; removed to enable more time for new Chairman and Comm'r review  
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ABC7News @ABC7News 7 Nov  
Arlington's construction boom could be putting emergency radio communications in danger. [wj.la/1bfgtV4](#)  
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# APCO's Key Attributes (KA)

- Some apps are not safe or effective
  - Misleading claims such as “Use this app instead of calling 9-1-1.”
- APCO created a list of [Key Attributes of Effective Apps for Public Safety and Emergency Response](#) to guide the selection of apps on AppComm. Examples:
  - **Operability** (efficient use of data, minimal battery strain)
  - **Security**
  - **Communication with 9-1-1, sending data to PSAPs and Comm Centers, and interfacing with PSAPS** (NOTE: APCO has filed a PIN with ANSI to develop a standard for apps that interface with communications centers and public safety responders)
- This led to discussions with partners – such as NIST – who have expertise in issues such as app security

# Mobile Apps & 9-1-1

- April 27, APCO published a Fact Sheet and White Paper on Mobile Apps and 9-1-1
- Intended to educate the public and stakeholders in the app development community on the state of the 9-1-1 system and the role that mobile apps can play currently and in the future
- Shared early lessons learned from app efficiency and security testing pilots

# Misleading Claims

- The app can pinpoint user locations.
- The app is certified.
- Communicate directly with first responders.
- Better than 9-1-1
  
- (Often contradicted by the Terms of Service)
  - “not a replacement for 911”
  - “do not rely on the [app]”

# Technical Issues

- The 9-1-1 network is secure, reliable, and trusted. Apps must be as well.
- “9-1-1” apps run over the Internet and require heightened developer support.
- Today, there is no standard to ensure safety, nationwide use, competition, interoperability, etc.



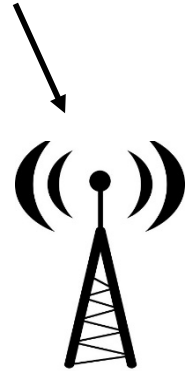




9-1-1



“24/7” Monitoring Center



PSAP



# What Developers Need to Know

- Contributing to an emergency response requires specialized knowledge & training
- 9-1-1 sets a high bar for user expectations
  - Free
  - Reliable
  - Universal
- Liability exposure

# What PSAPs Need to Know

- Without a common interface:
  - Monitoring challenge
  - Training for diverse and unexpected features/formats
  - No interoperability
- Pricing issues
  - Risks of adopting a proprietary solution the public comes to rely on
- Security issues

# APCO's Vision for a 9-1-1 App (1)

- Comply with industry standards
- Work anywhere in the country
- Be as reliable as the existing 9-1-1 system
- Preserve the familiar simplicity of 9-1-1
- Connect users to the appropriate PSAP
- Efficiently use/monitor device battery and throttle-down if necessary

# APCO's Vision for a 9-1-1 App (2)

- Work without delay, regardless of device or app software updates
- Be free to the public and not impose unreasonable costs on PSAPs
- Comply with FCC rules, state/local regs, and industry best practices
- Be device and OS agnostic
- Meet public safety's cybersecurity needs

# Next Steps

- ANSI Standard - Application Integration with Public Safety Communications Centers and Public Safety Responders
  - Common approach to interfaces for PSAPs
  - Making apps device and OS agnostic
  - Integration with legacy and Next Gen systems
  - Security requirements
- Continue to **work with partners** on app efficiency and security testing; refine the Key Attributes

# Thank you!

- AppComm: [www.appcomm.org](http://www.appcomm.org)
- APCO website: [www.apcointl.org](http://www.apcointl.org)
- Twitter: @GRO\_APCO

Fact Sheet and White Paper on Mobile Apps and 9-1-1:

<http://psc.apcointl.org/2015/04/27/apco-releases-fact-sheet-and-white-paper-on-mobile-apps-and-9-1-1/>