

Complying with “Kari’s Law”

Senate Bill 788, also known as Kari’s Law, was signed by Governor Greg Abbott on May 15, 2015. The new law directs that multiline telephone systems may no longer require that any extra digits be dialed when a call is placed to 9-1-1. In most cases, making the change is a matter programming.

Does this pertain to my business, a government agency, or any other entity?

Yes. The requirement is that, any business that owns or controls a multi-line telephone system that is capable of making outbound calls must configure the system to allow direct access to 9-1-1 without dialing “9” or any other code. *Do not dial 9-1-1 to test your system.* Contact us at info@elpaso911.org to arrange for testing.

What does this mean for my business or agency with a multi-line telephone system?

This means if your current system is not capable of directly dialing 9-1-1, you will need to make changes to your telephone system to allow direct dial access to 9-1-1. If your business or agency does not have IT personnel on site that can make the necessary changes you will need to contact the company that installed or maintains your telephone system and request that they make the changes.

Are there Additional Considerations?

Yes. If your system serves residential or business facility, the system must be configured to provide a notification to a central location on the site of your facility when a person within the residential or business facility dials 9-1-1. You should consider that this person be capable of directing emergency services to the location where 9-1-1 was dialed.

What if we are Unable to Have Our Phones Ready by the Deadline?

Providers of multiline telephone systems may request a one-year waiver to the direct-dial 9-1-1 requirement by filing an affidavit with their local 9-1-1 Authority. The affidavit must:

- Be filed before September 1st of 2016
- Provide the manufacturer and model of the system,
- State that the requirement would be unduly or unreasonably cost-prohibitive, and that a good faith attempt was made to reprogram the system

In addition to applying for a waiver, providers of systems that cannot comply are required to:

- Place an instructional sticker next to each phone which states in a bold, easily-readable 16-point font that, during the waiver period, the phone is unable to directly dial 9-1-1
- The sticker must also provide clear instructions for accessing 9-1-1 in an emergency.

Additional Information

Kari’s Law is the result of an incident in late 2013 in Marshall, Texas when Kari Hunt’s nine-year old daughter tried to call 9-1-1 from a hotel room because her mother was being attacked. Tragically, the child did not know to dial ‘9’ to get an outside line. Kari Hunt died before help could arrive.

For more information about Kari’s Law, go to www.facebook.com/changeitforkari

To read SB 788, go to: www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/pdf/SB00788F.pdf#navpanes=0

For information about complying with provisions of “Kari’s Law,” contact the El Paso County 911 District at info@elpaso911.org