

WIRELESS AUDITS PROVIDE PUBLIC SAFETY BENEFITS

"GeoComm is always on top of the program. We feel assured that our information is always up to date. There are no surprises and great personal communication. We depend on GeoComm to keep us in the know. Our success in getting help to those that rely on us is more reliable with their service. Hats off to the staff of GeoComm."

~ Jody Clyde, Supervisor, Boyd Holt E9-1-1, Nebraska - Boyd Holt received a Wireless Audit in March 2012

The purpose of a wireless audit is to validate crucial public safety information used by wireless service providers, third party providers, and telephone companies to route 9-1-1 calls. A successful audit provides the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) with assurance that appropriate information to accurately and effectively identify the tower site and sector is used during the course of Phase I wireless 9-1-1 calls.

Many different companies are involved in the wireless 9-1-1 call process and it is not uncommon for a change to be made effecting the tower site address or azimuth without the knowledge of the local public safety authority. An annual audit is recommended to verify that the routing, tower site address, and sector information are correct.

This accuracy information is extremely important to the PSAP for reasons other than appropriate routing; if Phase II information is unavailable during a wireless 9-1-1 call, then an accurate Phase I tower location and an approximate sector coverage area is important information to help locate the caller's general location.

When conducting a wireless audit, GeoComm examines the wireless tower site address to determine if the address is a valid for 9-1-1 purposes. Just a few of the common causes for an incorrect or inappropriate address are:

- The wireless service provider initially provided a legal description or directions to the tower site and the location was not updated to a valid street address after implementation.
- The tower site address is not shown in an Master Street Address Guide (MSAG) valid format.
- The tower site address is based on inaccurate coordinates.
- Someone with the wireless service provider, third party provider, or telephone company simply made an honest

mistake or typographical error when inputting location or routing information.

GeoComm also reviews the co-location of wireless carriers on the same tower site to determine if coding should be used to provide a unique tower site address for each wireless service provider.

Many agencies find that the audit is especially beneficial during the wireless maintenance period. The maintenance period occurs after Phase I and/or Phase II wireless 9-1-1 implementation is completed and PSAPs are receiving live 9-1-1 calls. It is at this point that the wireless carriers enter into a wireless maintenance phase and all tower site changes are not necessarily communicated back to the PSAP when they occur. Service providers continually make changes to their systems to improve coverage or performance. These changes can include increasing or decreasing the number of sectors on a tower, changing the tower coverage pattern or changing the orientation of sectors to an extent that it may affect call routing location information displayed to the PSAP.

Over the past year, GeoComm has completed 12 wireless audits for 12 county agencies.

"It is vitally important to understand that once wireless 9-1-1 is implemented, the work is not complete," stated to Greg Ballentine, GeoComm's Director of Consulting Services.

Upon completion of a wireless 9-1-1 audit, the PSAP receives a complete report on the current status of wireless within their jurisdiction, including corrections provided to the wireless service providers and any recommendations for correcting issues that were brought up during the course of the audit.

"Collectively across the country, communities have invested millions of dollars to implement wireless 9-1-1 service. Ensuring those investments continue to serve the public cannot be over-prioritized," Ballentine said.