

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL 911 DISTRICT **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

The Town of Norton and its neighbors are partnering to combine emergency dispatch and call-taking services, echoing the trend statewide and nationwide. The new plan will offer many benefits for Norton residents -- including, for the first time ever, allowing Norton residents to make 911 calls on their cell phones that will be answered by a municipal dispatcher, rather than the state police.

□ WHAT IS SEMRECC?

The Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911 District is the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the towns of Norton, Easton, Mansfield, Foxborough, along with Bristol County Fire Control. It will serve as Bristol County's National Warning System (NAWAS) answering and warning point and would serve as a main point of public communication in the event of a national incident or major disaster.

All District 911 operations will take place at the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communications Center (SEMRECC). SEMRECC is equipped to receive both wireline and wireless (landline and cell phone) 911 calls, and it handles deployment and allocation for police, fire and EMS services.

This means that cell phone 911 calls in the region will no longer be routed through a State Police Call Center.

□ HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?

Residents who have to dial 911 for an emergency should not notice any obvious differences when calling 911 from a landline. However, if you call 911 from a cell phone, you will notice that the SEMRECC dispatch center will immediately answer your call, rather than your call routing to a state police call center first. During an emergency, removing the extra step in the process of delivering emergency services will reduce response times.

SEMRECC dispatchers will simultaneously take your call and send help to you, removing extra steps in the process. Streamlining the process is intended to reduce police, fire and EMS response times, which can make the difference between life and death in the event of an emergency.

A review of SEMRECC's operations thus far also indicates that the regional call center will also answer calls faster (on fewer rings) than standalone municipal call centers have done in the past.

□ **WHEN WILL THE CHANGE TAKE PLACE?**

In 2017, the Norton Select Board voted unanimously to approve the Inter-Municipal Agreement to form SEMRECC. In doing so, Norton joined the communities of Foxborough, Mansfield and Easton as members of SEMRECC.

Each town agreed to regionalize their respective emergency communications operations and handling of 911 calls at a single, regionalized call center.

Norton Public Safety Communications ceased operations and transferred all Norton's 911 calls and dispatch operations to SEMRECC on December 8, 2020 at 10:00 AM.

□ **HOW WILL EASTON BENEFIT FROM THIS?**

As a part of SEMRECC, Norton will have all of its cellular 911 calls go directly to the regionalized call center, rather than going to a state police dispatcher first and then being transferred to the appropriate police or fire department.

In Mansfield and Foxborough, SEMRECC's streamlined operations have led to a 20 percent decrease on ring time (the wait before a 911 dispatcher answers your call) and a 40 percent decrease in the maximum ring time.

The town also projects to see a long-term cost savings due to economies of scale and efficiencies made possible through regionalization.

□ **HAS THE TOWN SOUGHT PUBLIC INPUT ON THIS PROJECT?**

Discussion on the SEMRECC project first began in 2016.)

In addition to these meetings, SEMRECC has also held several open public meetings. Information on those meetings can be found here: <http://www.se-mass911.org/minutes>.

□ **MEDIA COVERAGE**

[-Regional dispatch begins for Mansfield, Foxborough July 1](#) – Wicked Local, June 27, 2019

[-Mansfield, Foxborough regional dispatch center opens](#) – The Sun Chronicle, July 5, 2019

For more information about SEMRECC and the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911 District visit their website, <http://www.se-mass911.org/home>.