



## WHAT TO DO WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT

During an extended power outage, a corded (traditional) phone will usually keep working. If it doesn't, the best way to help yourself is by being prepared before the outage. The following are a few simple steps.

- Install a UPS (uninterrupted power supply) unit on your home computer for VoIP connectivity. Doing this may buy some VoIP time, but a UPS is temporary and may not last until power is restored.
- Keep cordless phone batteries charged at all times.
- Keep wireless phones fully charged.



## STEPS TO GET EMERGENCY HELP

Even if the VoIP service provider can automatically provide the callback phone number and address, help may still be delayed if the 9-1-1 center doesn't have the right information. Verify with the 9-1-1 call taker that the address they have for you is your physical address, not your billing address.

- Listen carefully to the 9-1-1 call taker, providing the correct address when asked.
- Follow up any address change with your VoIP service provider.
- If traveling with a laptop computer, contact your service provider to find out how your VoIP service works.

# CAUTION

## VoIP SUBSCRIBERS

A 9-1-1 call made with VoIP phone service may not bring the assistance that you need.



Produced by

**CALIFORNIA 9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**

[WWW.TD.DGS.CA.GOV/SERVICES/911](http://WWW.TD.DGS.CA.GOV/SERVICES/911)

# WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Not all Voice over Internet Protocol (**VoIP**) service providers automatically provide enhanced 9-1-1 information (name, address and callback number), which means police, fire or emergency medical personnel may not be sent to the right address when using a VoIP phone service.

- **Even if a VoIP phone is programmed to call 9-1-1, the call may not route to the correct answering center.**
- **The call may be directed to a non-emergency number and not be given the same answering priority as a 9-1-1 call.**
- **The name, address and call-back phone number may not be provided to the answering center. If the caller is unable to speak, help may not be sent.**



## DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!

A family member at home suddenly drops to the floor, unconscious and not breathing. A 9-1-1 call is placed on your home VoIP phone. Instead of reaching emergency services, a recording is heard (right).

**This message was heard by a teenager in Texas who attempted to call 9-1-1 from every VoIP phone in her home as her parents were shot by intruders.**

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN VoIP PHONE SERVICE

When considering replacing a traditional landline telephone with VoIP (broadband) phone service, verify with your VoIP service provider the emergency calling features on your VoIP phone and understand the potential limitations of 9-1-1.

**Subscribers are drawn to VoIP phone service because:**

- **There is one number where they can always be reached.**
- **They save money with free long-distance calls.**

**While a VoIP phone may look like a traditional phone, it connects to the Internet, not a telephone line.**

*"Stop. You must dial 9-1-1 from another telephone. Nine-one-one is not available from this telephone line. No emergency personnel will be dispatched. Please hang-up and dial 9-1-1 from a different phone."*



## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK VoIP SERVICE PROVIDERS:

- Will enhanced 9-1-1 work from this phone?
- Will my name, address and callback number be automatically provided to the 9-1-1 center?
- Will my call be sent to the 9-1-1 answering center in my community?
- Will the address provided to emergency responders be my physical rather than the billing address?

If the VoIP phone does not provide enhanced 9-1-1 service (name, address and callback number), tell others who use the VoIP home phone (family members, children, babysitters, neighbors and friends) that 9-1-1 may not work. Emergency 9-1-1 calls must instead be made on a wireless or traditional phone. Your life or a loved one's life could depend on sharing this information.