

# Calling the FCC to Protect Consumer Access to 911

With the traditional landline phone system, consumers can expect that if their home loses power, they can still pick up the phone and access emergency services by dialing 911. This is because during a power outage, the copper wire that supplied the phone lines conducted electricity and drew power from the phone company's central office. Now, this long-standing universal access to 911 is threatened. Newer voice technologies that rely on all-Internet-Protocol (IP)-based technologies, like Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), require an outside source of electricity and thus stop working during power outages unless there is battery back-up power for the phone.

This shift raises important questions, including:

- What happens to the ability to make emergency calls if you can't afford battery back-up?
- Is it dangerous to abandon universal access to 911 calls?
- Should we create a situation where we need to teach our children and our elderly grandparents that in an emergency they may have to try different phones in order to reach 911?

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) is looking at issues arising from the technology shift in the communications networks. Consumer advocates have petitioned the FCC to reconsider its inadequate treatment of back-up power by the industry. The International Association of Fire Chiefs has filed in support of the consumer advocates' petition.

This is a fundamental health and safety issue that is too important to let slip away! Consider weighing in with the FCC regarding the importance of preserving universal access to 911 by supporting the consumer advocates' petition to the FCC.

To submit comments to the FCC, visit: <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/upload/displ>. See the box at the top (Proceeding Number) and type in 14-174 and submit your comments in the text box. **It is uncertain when the FCC will rule on the consumer advocates' petition to protect access to 911, so please submit comments as soon as possible.**