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US Virgin Islands Launches Life-Saving Text-to-911 Emergency Service

New technology expands access to emergency services for all USVI residents

Christiansted, St. Croix U.S. Virgin Islands — The US Virgin Islands Emergency Services today announced the official launch of Text-to-911, a groundbreaking emergency communication service that allows residents to contact 911 via text message when a voice call is not possible.

"Call if you can, text if you can't"

This new service, now available across all US Virgin Islands, enables residents to send text messages to reach emergency dispatchers in situations where making a voice call would be impossible or potentially dangerous.

"Text-to-911 represents a significant advancement in our emergency response capabilities," said Bruce Kelly Deputy Director of Logistics at VITEMA. "While we always encourage people to call when possible, this technology provides a crucial lifeline for those who cannot speak due to emergency circumstances or disabilities."

Who Benefits Most from Text-to-911

The service is particularly valuable for:

- Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities
- People experiencing medical emergencies that prevent verbal communication
- Those in dangerous situations such as home invasions or domestic violence incidents where speaking aloud could increase risk
- Residents in areas with limited voice cellular service but sufficient text capability

Detailed information about the Text-to-911 service, including frequently asked questions and usage guidelines, is available on the official USVI Emergency Services website at <https://vitema.vi.gov/text-to-911>.

Important Reminder: A Tool for Emergencies Only

The USVI Emergency Services reminds all residents that misuse of the 911 system, including prank calls or texts, is a serious offense that can divert critical resources from genuine emergencies and result in legal consequences. The Text-to-911 system should only be used for legitimate emergency situations.

"Remember our simple guideline: Call if you can, text if you can't," emphasized Director Jaschen. "This new service enhances our ability to serve all residents, especially our most vulnerable populations, but it's essential that everyone uses it responsibly."

VITEMA is the sole Virgin Islands government agency designated to supervise, administer, and coordinate all-hazards response and recovery operations. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state, and local government agencies, and with the private sector - individuals, families, non-profits, and businesses - VITEMA ensures the Territory's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and building the capacity to recover.

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