
New 911 technology debuts on Peninsula

By Haidyn Brockelman
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Callers to 911 in the Peninsula region can now share real-time video and photos to communicate more effectively with first responders during emergencies.

The Peninsula Regional Emergency Communications Center, which covers York and James City counties and the cities of Poquoson and Williamsburg, announced the roll-out of the new technology Thursday. Now, when callers dial 911, they can receive a prompt to share video or photos from their phones.

The goal of this

“next-generation technology” is to modernize the 911 system in order to better serve Peninsula region residents and visitors, according to Terry Hall, director of the PRECC.

“When seconds matter, a clearer picture of an emergency can save lives,” Hall said in a release. “Letting a 911 caller share with first responders a video of an unfolding emergency will lead to better outcomes for everyone involved.”

An estimated 80% of the more than 240 million 911 calls made in the United



Hall

States each year come in through mobile devices, according to the National Emergency Number Association. The new system means that callers could livestream video from the

scene of a car crash, or send a photo of a missing person. That information could help first responders know what kind of equipment might be needed.

Hall said he isn't aware of communications centers in Hampton Roads using the technology, but believes others are looking into it.

In addition to the new

911 program, PRECC has started using AI technology that transcribes and translates 911 calls. The technology can flag keywords, such as “heart attack” or “robbery,” and use advanced mapping software to pinpoint the location of the closest responding resources.

“In 911, saving seconds saves lives,” Hall said in the release. “This technology is game changing. It will help us better help people across the region when they need us the most.”

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