County of Powhatan, Virginia
Press Statement

RE: Powhatan County Public Safety Communications to start accepting Text-to-911 Calls

On August 1, 2019, The Powhatan County Public Safety Communications 911 Center in conjunction with The Powhatan County Sheriff's Office will implement the ability to Text-to-911 during an emergency. Text-to-911 service will be available for those individuals who cannot safely make a voice call to 911 in an emergency. This will be a valuable service to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Testing for Text-to-911 has been completed in Powhatan County and is available with plans from AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, & Verizon Wireless. Text-to-911 may not be available outside of Powhatan County. If a text is made to 911 where that service is not available, a message will be sent back to the phone advising the customer to make a voice call.

Some situations when Text-to-911 is appropriate:
- Deaf, hard of hearing callers, or individuals with a speech disability
- A caller who is unable to speak due to a medical or other condition
- Emergency situations that would put the caller in danger if making a voice call
- Examples include abduction, domestic violence or active shooter situation

When texting to 911, follow these guidelines
- Provide your exact address or location

- Explain the type of emergency or help that is being requested
- Be prepared to answer any questions that the 911-telecommunicator texts back.
- Use plain language; do not use abbreviations, symbols, emoticons, or photos.
- Messages should be brief and concise

Texting 911 can be done by typing "911" in the field for a phone number. No other numbers need to be used. Texting should be done through your wireless phones text messaging service and not from third party texting applications. Text-to-911 does require an active telephone service plan with data or it will not work.

Remember, the best way to contact 911 is by making a voice call. Please only utilize this service in emergency circumstances where a voice call is not possible or safe.

The Powhatan County PSC-911 Center in conjunction with the Powhatan County Sheriff's Office are excited to offer Text-to-911 service to the citizens of Powhatan County. Representatives from all departments will be available that day for questions from the public and/or media.

Remember: CALL if You Can, TEXT if You Can't!

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