



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Voice over Internet Protocol Information for Niagara Residents

NIAGARA REGION, May 15, 2008 – Niagara emergency responders (Police, Fire, and Ambulance) are advising residents who subscribe to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service to contact their provider to ensure the appropriate service will be available in the event of an emergency. VoIP telephone services use a computer modem and an Internet connection to transmit voice conversations.

Emergency calls made on land lines are answered by local 9-1-1 operators and the caller's location and phone number are automatically generated, making it easier to dispatch emergency responders. However, 9-1-1 calls made with VoIP may be transferred to an out-of-province call centre, and are not automatically tracked as there is no physical address linked to the signal. Therefore, if a caller is unable to speak, or if the call is disconnected, the operator may not have the required location information and this will impact response time or result in the dispatch of emergency responders to the wrong location.

Niagara emergency responders are asking residents using VoIP service to explore the possible 9-1-1 limitations of this service by contacting their service provider and ensuring their customer contact information is accurate. The attached fact sheet is posted on emergency responder websites across Niagara and offers recommendations to VoIP customers.

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