

International Wireless 9-1-1 Call General Information

In anticipation of increased international travel during the summer of 2026, PSAPs should expect a rise in 9-1-1 calls originating from mobile devices purchased and provisioned outside the U.S. The following information summarizes how these calls may differ from domestic wireless calls when presenting in your 9-1-1 call-handling equipment (CHE). *This document is intended as a quick reference tool for PSAPs and 9-1-1 telecommunicators (TCs) and is **NOT** intended to instruct international travelers on how to reach 9-1-1 or emergency services.*

General Information About International Wireless Devices and Systems:

1. International travelers typically use mobile devices with foreign SIM/eSIMs and roam on U.S. networks. In some situations, including when calling 9-1-1, the device may need to roam back to its home network before completing a call on the U.S. based network. This can lead to significant delays (up to 2 minutes) or several dropped call attempts before successfully reaching 9-1-1.
2. Phone number standards differ outside North America. While U.S. numbers are 10-digits, other countries support numbers up to 15 digits. Longer phone numbers exceed the character limits of ANI displays on U.S. 9-1-1 call handling equipment.
3. 9-1-1 is NOT the three-digit emergency number used globally: Other commonly used three-digit emergency numbers include 112, 999, and 000.
 - a. International wireless devices are programmed to transmit these numbers as “emergency” calls.
 - b. U.S. mobile networks route any received emergency call – domestic or international – to the appropriate PSAP based on estimated caller location.
 - c. U.S based landline systems will not transmit non-9-1-1 emergency numbers as emergency calls.
4. Types of foreign devices expected:
 - a. **Active international device with or without international calling plan:** The information in this JOB AID applies to these devices.
 - b. **Active international device with dual SIM cards (one U.S. based):** When a U.S. SIM is active, the device operates like a standard U.S. device due to its 10-digit U.S. number and domestic network affiliation. The telecommunicator may not be aware the phone is internationally sourced.
 - c. **3G-only devices:** These devices cannot connect to 9-1-1 (or complete any wireless call), regardless of SIM configuration or calling plan, because U.S. networks no longer support 3G technology.

Recent Updates by U.S. Carriers and Software Manufacturers:

1. Since international 9-1-1 call testing began in late 2025, major U.S. cellular carriers have updated the way they present international telephone numbers to U.S. based 9-1-1 call-handling equipment. This change has not been tested or verified at scale and early tests have demonstrated inconsistent behavior and reliability. Telecommunicators should still verify callback number and location information for all callers.
2. Early testing revealed inconsistent behavior by over-the-top (OTT) software manufacturers when international 9-1-1 calls are received. Several applications have been updated to improve accuracy when processing these calls. *PSAPs should request the most current international 9-1-1 call handing details from their OTT application vendor to capture any changes their specific vendor has recently made.*

International Wireless 9-1-1 Call Job Aid

CALLBACK NUMBERS/ANI DISPLAY:

- Most international mobile devices appear on 9-1-1 equipment as “**Non-Service-Initialized (NSI)**” or “**911 Only**” devices, with no true callback number provided in the ANI field.
- When displayed as NSI, a Pseudo ANI (PANI) will appear in the ANI field with a 9-1-1 area code followed by seven digits that do not represent a real telephone number.
- *In a recent change by wireless carriers*, when the caller’s home carrier has an active roaming agreement with the U.S. carrier delivering the call, **the foreign callback number MAY display in the NAM field** (which usually displays the carrier or subscriber name) on the ANI/ALI screen.
 - This will appear as: “CBN + Callback Number” (up to 15 digits).
 - Call-handling and mapping applications are not typically configured to extract a callback number from the NAM field, so telecommunicators must manually look for the callback number in the new location.
 - Unless PSAPs make configuration changes, downstream systems (mapping, Computer-Aided Dispatch, Records, etc.) will not process the callback number from the NAM field.
- To place a call to an international number, dial the **U.S. exit code “0-1-1”** followed by the number.
- ***PSAPs must have plans in place to callback international numbers (e.g. an international calling plan on the 9-1-1 CHE, a business line or other approved device). As a last resort, PSAPs can use the FIFA World Cup 2026 GETS card/PIN to call an international number. Each PSAP should maintain an addendum to this job aid outlining its specific international callback procedures.***

CALLER LOCATION INFORMATION (MAPPING):

- Wireless location data from international devices is often too imprecise for reliable dispatching and must be verified by the telecommunicator.
- Most international wireless calls arrive as **Wireless Phase I (WPH1)**. Rebid attempts may upgrade the location to **Network-Based Phase II** (an estimate of location), but **Device-Based Location** is rarely available.

TEXT-TO-9-1-1:

- **U.S. based text-to-9-1-1 is NOT supported** by international devices. Neither caller-initiated texts to 9-1-1 nor PSAP-initiated texts can be sent to or received from a foreign number.
- Voice should be considered the only dependable method of communication with international callers.

OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) APPLICATIONS/SUPPLEMENTAL DATA SOURCES:

- While there are OTT software solutions from multiple vendors available that render callback numbers and accurate locations from international callers, not all OTT applications work with international devices.
- In testing, OTT applications sometimes delivered usable international callback numbers and precise location data, however results across the country and across vendors were inconsistent and must be verified by the telecommunicator.
- Early testing in 2025 demonstrated that depending on whether the phone is connected via Wi-Fi or cellular, and what OTT application is in use, callback numbers may display in inconsistent formats (e.g. missing the “+” prefix or including an extra “1” before the country code), however these issues have since been remediated by at least two OTT software vendors.

WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS (WEA) MESSAGING:

- WEA messages sent from the U.S. networks **WILL NOT** be delivered to international devices.