

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL 911 DISTRICT **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

The Town of Easton and its neighbors are partnering to combine emergency dispatch and call-taking services, echoing the trend statewide and nationwide. The new plan will offer many benefits for Easton residents -- including, for the first time ever, allowing Easton residents to make 911 calls on their cell phones that will be answered by a municipal dispatcher, rather than the state police.

- **WHAT IS SEMRECC?**

The Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911 District is the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the towns of Mansfield and Foxborough. Next year, the District will be joined by the towns of Easton and Norton, along with Bristol County Fire Control. It will serve as Bristol County's National Warning System (NAWAS) answering and warning point and would serve as a main point of public communication in the event of a national incident or major disaster.

All District 911 operations will take place at the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communications Center (SEMRECC). SEMRECC is equipped to receive both wireline and wireless (landline and cell phone) 911 calls, and it handles deployment and allocation for police, fire and EMS services.

This means that cell phone 911 calls in the region will no longer be routed through a state police call center.

- **HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?**

Once SEMRECC's permanent facility at High Rock in Foxborough is renovated, all of Easton's 911 calls and dispatch operations will be answered at SEMRECC. The renovation is scheduled to be bid this fall, and the current target is a first quarter of FY2021 (July-Sept. 2020) opening.

Residents who have to dial 911 for an emergency should not notice any obvious differences when calling 911 from a landline. However, if you call 911 from a cell phone, you will notice that the SEMRECC dispatch center will immediately answer your call, rather than your call routing to a state police call center first. During an emergency, removing the extra step in the process of delivering emergency services will reduce response times.

SEMRECC dispatchers will simultaneously take your call and send help to you, removing extra steps in the process. Streamlining the process is intended to reduce police, fire and EMS response times, which can make the difference between life and death in the event of an emergency.

A review of SEMRECC's operations thus far also indicates that the regional call center will also answer calls faster (on fewer rings) than standalone municipal call centers have done in the past.

- **WHEN WILL THE CHANGE TAKE PLACE?**

On Jan. 23, 2017 the Easton Select Board voted unanimously to approve the Inter-Municipal Agreement to form SEMRECC. In doing so, Easton joined the communities of Foxborough, Mansfield and Norton as members of SEMRECC.

Each town agreed to regionalize their respective emergency communications operations and handling of 911 calls at a single, regionalized call center.

Easton's 911 calls and dispatch operations will take place at SEMRECC with a target start time of the first quarter of FY2021 (July-Sept. 2020).

SEMRECC will provide public updates on the progress of the High Rock building project throughout the winter and spring to keep the public informed of the schedule.

- **WHERE WILL MY CALLS ACTUALLY BE ANSWERED?**

On July 1, SEMRECC opened at its temporary location at the Foxborough public safety building. Next summer, SEMRECC will move to its permanent location, a brand-new facility on High Rock Road in Foxborough.

Funding for the new facility is being provided through grant funding, giving the four communities a state-of-the-art 21st century emergency communications center at no cost to taxpayers.

Currently, SEMRECC serves all emergency dispatch communications and 911 call services for the towns of Foxborough and Mansfield. Once SEMRECC moves to its new permanent location, the towns of Easton and Norton will join.

- **HOW WILL EASTON BENEFIT FROM THIS?**

In an emergency, every second counts. Since going live on July 1, SEMRECC has shown to minimize 911 call times and ring times in Foxborough and Mansfield.

As a part of SEMRECC, Easton will have all of its cellular 911 calls go directly to the regionalized call center, rather than going to a state police dispatcher first and then being transferred to the appropriate police or fire department.

In Mansfield and Foxborough, SEMRECC's streamlined operations have led to a 20 percent decrease on ring time (the wait before a 911 dispatcher answers your call) and a 40 percent decrease in the maximum ring time.

The town also projects to see a long-term cost savings due to economies of scale and efficiencies made possible through regionalization.

- **HAS THE TOWN SOUGHT PUBLIC INPUT ON THIS PROJECT?**

The Town of Easton has held three recent public meetings about the progress of SEMRECC since July 2018. (Several other meetings have been held since discussions first began in 2016.)

- [Board of Selectmen Agenda April 10, 2019](#)
- [Board of Selectmen Agenda Aug. 27, 2018](#)
- [Board of Selectmen Agenda July 25, 2018](#)

For all Easton meeting agendas visit: <https://eastontownma.documents-on-demand.com/>.

In addition to these meetings, SEMRECC has also held several open public meetings. Information on those meetings can be found here: <http://www.se-mass911.org/minutes>.

- **MEDIA COVERAGE**

- [Regional dispatch begins for Mansfield, Foxborough July 1](#) – *Wicked Local*, June 27, 2019
- [Mansfield, Foxborough regional dispatch center opens](#) – *The Sun Chronicle*, July 5, 2019

For more information about SEMRECC and the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911 District visit their website, <http://www.se-mass911.org/home>.

