



WIRELESS PRIORITY SERVICE

Congestion on wireless (cellular) networks caused by natural and/or man-made disasters can affect emergency response capabilities by limiting call completion for public safety and national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) personnel. The Wireless Priority Service (WPS), offered by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), was developed to address the growing need for priority communications for select cellular users. WPS enhances call completion for select users when excessive call volumes exist. OEC offers WPS access to eligible federal, state, local, tribal, and select private sector users supporting NS/EP activities. During times of network congestion, WPS users receive priority calling to the desired destination number from an authorized user's cell phone.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR WPS?

Enrollment in the WPS program is reserved for select users who support public safety and NS/EP activities, traditionally those with command and control functions that are critical to management of, and response to, national security and emergency situations, particularly during the first 24 to 72 hours following an incident. WPS supports critical Continuity of Government and Continuity of Operations; federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal (FSLTT) emergency preparedness and response communications; non-military executive branch communications networks and systems; and critical infrastructure protection networks.

In the wake of the April 2013 Boston Marathon, response and recovery calls made through WPS received a 93 percent call completion rate.

WHY SHOULD YOU ENROLL?

WPS users rely on cellular communications to perform critical functions, including those areas related to leadership, safety, maintenance of law and order, finance, and public health. Acts of terrorism, such as cyber-attacks, natural disasters, power outages, and software problems, can cripple the telephone services of an entire region.

Congestion alone can prevent access to circuits. WPS can be extremely beneficial during an emergency in which the public telecommunications networks are degraded by congestion or damage to the infrastructure. NS/EP personnel enrolled in WPS have a greater chance of call completion on an operational cellular network than those without the service.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU KNOW?

- WPS is complementary to, and can be most effective, when used in conjunction with the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS). GETS is the landline priority service offered and managed by OEC and has the same eligibility requirements as WPS.
- WPS is available in all nationwide networks and some regional networks including: AT&T, C Spire, Cellcom, GCI, SouthernLINC, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular and Verizon Wireless.
- WPS is an add-on feature to existing commercial wireless services; no special phones are required.

- Users can apply for WPS through OEC.
- WPS users are responsible for any service provider charges for activation, service, and per-minute usage associated with WPS. Wireless carriers can charge a one-time activation fee of up to \$10.00, a monthly access charge of no more than \$4.50, and a maximum of \$0.75 per minute for WPS calls.
- OEC is responsible for WPS infrastructure enhancements and the day-to-day management of WPS.
- WPS operates in a constant state of readiness.
- To invoke WPS, enter * 272 and destination number on a WPS-enabled phone.
- OEC recommends including WPS in operational plans and communications exercising.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact the DHS Priority Telecommunications Service Center at 866-627-2255 or 703-676-2255, via email at

WPS@DHS.GOV, or visit WWW.DHS.GOV/WPS.