



## News Release

1450 K.L.O. Road  
Kelowna, B.C. V1W 3Z4  
Telephone: (250) 763-4918  
Fax: (250) 763-0606  
[www.regionaldistrict.com](http://www.regionaldistrict.com)  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
[www.cordemergency.ca](http://www.cordemergency.ca)

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### **Interior Regional Districts Moving 9-1-1 Call Answer to E-Comm**

This fall, 9-1-1 call answer services for nine interior regional districts will move to a new service provider.

Starting November 18<sup>th</sup>, 9-1-1 calls placed from the Regional District of Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, Okanagan-Similkameen, Thompson-Nicola, Columbia-Shuswap, Squamish-Lillooet (North), Central Kootenay, East Kootenay and Kootenay-Boundary Regional Districts will be answered through E-Comm, the emergency communication centre located in the Lower Mainland.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) provides initial 9-1-1 call response services to the nine regional districts throughout the B.C. Interior. The RDCO currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for initial Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) service, which is provided out of the Southeast District Operational Communications Centre (OCC) in Kelowna. That is where all 9-1-1 calls placed within the nine regional districts are answered by a Telecommunications Operator who determines the nature of the emergency call and quickly transfers the caller to the appropriate first responder agency (Police, Fire or BC Ambulance).

Regional District of Central Okanagan Chair Robert Hobson says, "For almost two years, we have been exploring various options for 9-1-1 call answer services on behalf of all nine interior regional districts. In 2012 we were advised by the RCMP that we would be facing significant increases for provision of 9-1-1 services. After an extensive review and negotiations, we've recently signed a five year contract with E-Comm in Vancouver. The transition from the RCMP OCC to E-Comm will take place November 18<sup>th</sup>."

Hobson adds, "By contracting our 9-1-1 service to E-Comm, over the five year agreement the regional districts will see a 25% reduction in overall program operating costs. That translates into total savings of more than \$2.1-million for the program, proportionately shared by the regional district partners.

"Public safety remains our top priority" says Hobson. "E-Comm's outstanding track record of high quality and reliable 9-1-1 answering services, means all residents in the affected regional districts can be assured there will be professionally handled, quick response to their initial emergency calls."

In addition, by having E-Comm provide initial emergency call handling service, the regional districts believe they'll be in a better position to take advantage of Next Generation 9-1-1 technology.

Until the change this fall to E-Comm, 9-1-1 PSAP calls will continue to be answered by staff in the Southeast District Operational Communications Centre. Within the service area of the nine

regional districts during 2013, a total of 226,796 9-1-1 calls were received and answered by the OCC based in Kelowna.

"We are pleased to partner with the Regional District of Central Okanagan and are committed to ensuring residents of all nine regional districts continue to receive high-quality, responsive 9-1-1 public safety answer point service 24-hours a day," says E-Comm President & CEO David Guscott. "E-Comm is focused on helping to create safer communities in B.C. through excellence in public-safety communication, and we believe that an integrated approach is a key element in achieving that vision."

E-Comm's integrated multi-jurisdictional call taking and dispatch centre provides economies of scale by providing 9-1-1 service for Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast Regional District, Whistler, Squamish, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (South). It recently agreed to begin providing 9-1-1 service this fall to the North Island 9-1-1 Corporation which is comprised of six regional districts in addition to the regional districts of Fraser Fort-George, Cariboo, Bulkley-Nechako and much of the Kitimat-Stikine RD. E-Comm utilizes top tier technology in a Vancouver building that is secure and purposely designed and built to resist a major earthquake (7+) and be self-sufficient for 72 hours. It has a number of backup provisions to ensure the continuity of 9-1-1 call answer services for a variety of scenarios. In 2013, E-Comm received 861,694 emergency calls, answering 98% of them in five seconds or less. The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) standard is to answer 90% of all calls within ten seconds.

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Contacts:

Regional District of Central Okanagan  
Bruce Smith  
Communications Officer  
250-469-6339

Columbia Shuswap Regional District  
Charles Hamilton  
Chief Administrative Officer  
250-832-8194

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen  
Bill Newell  
Chief Administrative Officer  
250-492-0237

Regional District of Kootenay Boundary  
John MacLean  
Chief Administrative Officer  
250-368-9148

Regional District of North Okanagan  
Ron Baker  
Community/Protective Services Manager  
250-550-3731

Regional District of Central Kootenay  
Brian Carruthers  
Chief Administrative Officer  
250-352-8152

Thompson-Nicola Regional District  
Ron Stone  
Manager of Community Services  
250-377-7078

Regional District of East Kootenay  
Lee-Ann Crane  
Chief Administrative Officer  
250-489-2791

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District  
Jeannette Nadon  
Communications and Grants Coordinator  
604-894-6371 (x239)

E-Comm  
Jody Robertson  
Director of Corporate Communications and  
Corporate Secretary  
604-215-4956