

Feature Article

A Look At Emergency Phone Numbers

Call 911 or 123 Depending Where You Live

Text by John Bolduc

When In Rome Do As the Romans Do. Don't Dial 911, Dial 112

There's a hold up in the Bronx, Brooklyn's broken out in fights. There's a traffic jam in Harlem that's backed up to Jackson Heights. There's a scout troop short a child, Khrushchev's due at Idlewild Car 54, Where Are You?

That's the lyrics to the television show Car 54, where are you. The mythical Car 54 operated out of NYPD's 53rd Precinct. This was my first image as a child as to who responded to an emergency call when such a call was placed. Back when the show aired in the early 1960's on NBC, if you had an emergency, very often you had the 7 digit, or as in my city 5 digit, phone number posted next to the phone. The phone back then was attached to a short cord, or mounted to a wall and you never had to go looking for it! If for some reason you did not have the number for the police or fire department posted in a conspicuous place, dialing 0 for Operator would get you in the right direction. When Alexander Graham Bell placed the worlds first emergency call, "Watson come here, I want you", there was no dialing mechanism at all. That was on March 10, 1876 when Mr. Bell spilled some acid upon himself

As extension phones became in vogue and society became even more mobile, having the emergency number either handy or memorized became much less likely. Even if you remembered the emergency number from when you lived in Springfield, it's not the same number now that you live in Newtown.

Enter an idea. A universal three digit number that would connect you to a public safety call receiving operator. Actually an idea older than you may realize. As you read on, think of the depression of the 1930's. The economy might have been down, but creative thinking and innovation was alive and well.

Timeline:

July, 1937 - The first wide area universal number to report emergencies was first used in England, in July of 1937. The Brits could ring 999 to call for police, medical or fire departments, from anywhere in the country. The system was implemented as a result of a disastrous fire. Calls were delayed reporting fatal fire that took five lives. The first 999 call was placed at when a resident in London called to report a burglar outside her home. The burglar was

apprehended.

June, 1959 - The city of Winnipeg Manitoba in Canada initiated a 999 emergency number system.

1961 - Australia introduces its 000 emergency number in metropolitan areas of the country.

1967 - Congress passed the legal mandate to establish an emergency phone number.

February, 1968 - The first "staged" American 911 call was placed in Haleyville, Alabama by an independent phone company.

January, 1968 - AT&T announces their designation of 911 as a universal emergency number at a press conference in the Washington (DC) office of Indiana Rep. Ed Roush, who had championed for Congressional support for "one number." AT&T's plan affected only the Bell companies, and not any of the independent telephone companies. Up to this point, the number "911" wasn't mentioned in any literature, and apparently wasn't identified until the press conference. In fact, a Wall Street Journal article written the day before the press conference didn't mention "911" as the number that AT&T selected. (At this point I'd like to thank AT&T for continuing to send me a quarterly dividend check of 96 cents).

February, 1968 - Nome Alaska implements their 911 system.

March, 1970 - First California 911 system is installed in the city of Gustine in Merced County, in the state's central valley.

1976 - Chicago Illinois has the first enhanced 911 system of any major city in the United States. It is called enhanced, but has far fewer features than today's E911.

January, 1977 - AT&T began working on a full Enhanced 911 systems in Orange County Florida. This trial system had the features of ANI, ALI, m selective routing and selective transfer.

December, 1982 - The metro Minneapolis-St. Paul area implements an E911 system that was reportedly the first multi-county Enhanced system in the country. It served seven surrounding counties.

1996 - A hacker in England was able to cause some havoc in the State of Florida. He developed a computer program to access simultaneous several 911 circuits and for a short time crippled several 911 answering points. He was caught by British authorities and dealt with.

March, 2000 - A hacker from Texas wrote a program to cause modems to dial 911 at random, but this was discovered before any damage was done. Once

again, the subject was dealt with.

October, 2001 - St. Clair County Illinois is the first communications center in the country to provide Phase II wireless E911 service, (Verizon Wireless customers only).

December, 2001 - Rhode Island 911 began state-wide Phase II on from Sprint PCS customers with assisted-GPS handsets.

But Why Use 911?

Why was the number 911 chosen as the emergency number. I have some thoughts on that. First is followed the pattern of similar telephone company services in some areas of a three digit service number. For instance, 411 for information, 611 for customer service. The phone company also used similar numbers in some areas for internal use such as 511 and 711. The number chosen also could not be that first three digits on an area code used in the country. Why not 999. My thought on that is because rotary phones were still by far the most common phone in the late 1960's and it was much quicker to dial 911 than 999. Then again, it would have been very quick to dial 111, but that number, or any number beginning with 1, was not available through the switching systems of that era.

When you call 911 from a home hard wired phone your call is often directed to what is referred to as a public safety

answering point (PSAP). In my home state of New Hampshire, there are two such point, the first on-line was in Concord, the second in Laconia. Things get interesting when you place a cell call to 911 from New Hampshire, Maine, or Vermont. All these calls get routed first to the PSAP in New Hampshire. Neither your cell phone number nor the callers location is displayed to the 911 operator. Not exactly an ideal situation as many travelers who come across an emergency do not know exactly where they are.

That is why E911 was developed. Phase One Enhanced 911 is a system that helps emergency providers in gathering information related to the calls. When you dial 911 from a cell phone, the system provides the operator with your wireless phone number and the location of the cellular tower handling the call.

Emergency Numbers Around the World

This list is presented by the author to demonstrate the various emergency number around the world, however, this should not be relied upon if you are visiting a foreign country. Check with local officials or service providers for the most up to date information when traveling:

County	Number	Notes /		Swedish (in bilingual areas).
Argentina	101		Finland	10022
Australia	100		France	112
Australia	000	Original number introduced in 1961.		
Austria	112	German and English.	France	15
Austria	112*		France	17
Austria	122	(Firefighters)	France	18
Austria	133	(Police)	Germany	110
Austria	144	(Ambulances)	Germany	112
Belgium	100	(Firefighters, Ambulances)	Greece	100
Belgium	101	(Police) Belgium	Greece	112
Belgium	112	Dutch, French or German varying by region	Greece and French.	166
Brazil	190		Greece	199
Canada	911		Iceland	0112
Colombia	123		Iceland	112
Denmark	112			
Denmark	112	Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, English and German	Ireland	112
England	999		Ireland	999
Finland	112	Finnish and	Israel	100
			Italy and	112

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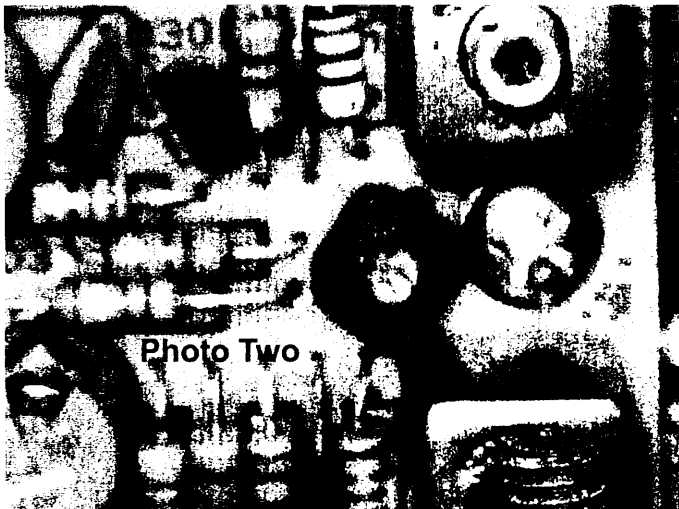


Photo Two

component in the area of concern on the VCO board was a trimmer capacitor. See Photo2. C319 with a value of 6_20Pf, it is the square plastic part directly to the left of the Philips head screw. The normal function of this capacitor was to setting the "lock range" or frequency operating window for the VCO. Given the very high frequency(VHF,,) range the VCO operated within, it would not take much to cause the VCO to fail as the result of a poor connection inside the trimmer, due to contamination or fatigue. We replaced the trimmer with one of the same value and adjusted it to ensure the VCO would "lock" across the range needed for full frequency coverage for the scanner, and have not seen any further problems thus far.

Quick Mods For The TS1/2

For those that want to use the TS1 or TS2 essentially as a programmable discriminator source "platform", the tap point for the FM Discriminator is at pin 10 of IC U201, which should be marked as an "ULN3859", which generically is a typical MC3359 IC. An easy connection point to use instead of pin 10, is at Test Point TP201, which directly in front of the IC.

Another useful add on for this old classic is what I call an "almost no effort S Meter"; this done by tapping the AGC(Automatic Gain Control) output on the IC used for detecting AM modulated Air Band signals. In most scanners the IC used for AM signal detection is turned ON only when Air Band is selected. However in the old TS1/2, it is continuously active, but the AGC is used only for AM mode operation. Therefore, all that you need to do is attach a 1K ohm resistor to pin 12 of IC203. This should be marked as a CA3088, and is located towards the front, between where the two ribbon cables tie onto the Main board. The resistor serves to simply protect the IC from the AGC line being shorted to Ground. On the other side of the resistor, connect a 0 to1 MA meter. You can also connect a 5 or 10K ohm trimpot in line as a means of calibrating the meter to read a full scale for the strongest signal.

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Italy	115	Fire Dept
Italy	118	Ambulances
Jamaica	119	
Japan	110	
Liechtenstein	112	German and English
		Luxembourg's, German, French and English.
Luxembourg	112	unknown
		partial country coverage provided by 3rd party for fee
Luxembourg	113	Dutch and English.
Mexico	080	Implemented in 1958.
		Fire Dept
Netherlands	112	Police
		Norwegian and English.
New Zealand	111	Ambulance
Norway	110	
Norway	112	Portuguese, Spanish, English and French.
		unknown
Norway	113	Forestry
Philippines	111	
Poland	997	very limited coverage area
Portugal	112	
Portugal	115	
Portugal	117	
Romania	961	
Russia	051	
South Africa	112	Ambulance
Spain	061	Fire Dept
Spain	080	Police
Spain	091	Spanish, in some regions English, French, or German
Spain	112	old number
		old number
Spain	532	Swedish and English, some regions German, French, Finnish and Spanish.
Sweden	90000	
Sweden	112	
Thailand	191	
United Kingdom	112	English, Welsh in Wales.
		old number
United Kingdom	999	
United States	911	