

DRAFT POLICY – TRANSFERRING CALLS TO 988

988 is a new phone number that provides support to people experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crises, and to family members and advocates of those suffering. 988 is available nationally for call, text, or (in some locations) chat.

988 is provided nation-wide by Lifeline Contact Centers. Call takers are available 24/7. Callers are routed to a center based on their area code, not their physical location. The key differences between 988 and 911 as outlined by National Emergency Number Association (NENA) are as follows:

- “Callers / texters / chat visitors are not required to give their name to receive assistance from [the Lifeline]. During the conversation some identifying details might be gleaned by [the Lifeline] that can be shared with the PSAP to assist with identification / location, but [the Lifeline] do not have any way to test the veracity of any caller- / texter-provided information
- A person at risk may voluntarily provide identifying information or location information if they consent to assistance, but in many cases a person intent on suicide will not provide those details. During the conversation, if an immediate life-threatening emergency such as a suicide attempt in progress, [the Lifeline] will ask the person for their name and location. If the person at risk does not disclose this, [the Lifeline] may have no other way to obtain the current location
- In general, [the Lifeline] should be able to provide a PSAP with: the phone number being used by the person at imminent risk or the IP address (if available for an online chat service). Mobile carrier information may also be available.

If a caller is at risk and cannot or will not provide their name or location, Lifeline will attempt to use a reverse phone lookup to help identify the individual’s city and state. This may not be the caller’s location and may be outdated or inaccurate.

POLICY

TRANSFERRING CALLS

TO 988:

Call takers may transfer calls to 988 based on the following levels:

Level 1: Routine

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- Distressed caller appropriate for phone intervention with trained behavioral health professional with referrals for services within 72 hours.
- No homicidal thoughts, intent, or behavior
- Suicidal thoughts acceptable if no plan and/or means

Level 2: Moderate

TRANSFER TO 988

- Distressed caller with imminent need of in-person behavioral health support
- No homicidal thoughts, intent, or behavior

- Suicidal thoughts with no plan or no direct access to lethal weapons
- Minor self-injurious behavior

Level 3: Urgent DISPATCH CRT TEAM and/or PATROL

- Active aggression
- Florid psychosis
- Homicidal thoughts with no active behaviors or intent
- Active cutting (self-injurious behavior) with concern for medical risk.
- Suicidal thoughts with plan and access to lethal weapons.
- Emergency custody order (EMERGCO)

Level 4: Emergent DISPATCH Immediately

- Direct, immediate threats to life
- Active suicide attempt
- Active assault on others with ability to cause significant harm.
- Any gun present and accessible.
- Emergency custody order (EMERGCO) with immediate security threat.

RECEIVING CALLS FROM 988: Transfers from 988 to administrative lines may occur in the following cases:

1. The person needing intervention is willing and able to provide clarification on their location to receive help.
2. A third-party caller reporting imminent risk involving someone they know and are able to give 911 further information regarding the situation and location.
3. Emergencies not related to suicide that involve mental health or emotional distress that requires life-saving intervention.

988 may contact local agencies directly rather than transferring callers who are currently in progress of suicide or at imminent risk. A supervisor or colleague at the center may contact the PSAP for assistance on behalf of the person needing intervention while the crisis counselor continues to interact with the person needing intervention. They will remain on the line with the caller as long as the caller is willing to remain on the line or until intervention arrives.

PINGING PHONES

When a subject's life is at immediate risk, call takers or dispatchers should contact the cell phone provider to ping the cell phone for location information.

Conduct an Internet Protocol (IP) lookup if imminent threat is determined through a chat interaction by contacting the subject's internet provider (if known).

The following websites may be used to determine the internet provider for an IP address. Pings are then completed with the internet provider in the same manner as cell phone providers.

[Instant IP Address Lookup \(whatismyipaddress.com\)](http://whatismyipaddress.com)

[American Registry for Internet Numbers \(arin.net\)](http://arin.net)