

## **WIRELESS PERFORMANCE TESTING PROGRAM**

Tarrant County 9-1-1 District recognized the need for a wireless performance testing program due to the increase in the number of 9-1-1 calls coming from cell phones. 9-1-1 calls from cell phones rose from 28% of total 9-1-1 calls in 2000 to 72% of total 9-1-1 calls in 2008. Current studies indicate that about 18% - 20% of the households in the United States no longer have a landline telephone. These households have chosen to use cell phones instead of landline phones at home.

Performance testing of cell phones began in 2005 and is ongoing. To date Tarrant County 9-1-1 District has captured data from over 4,500 test calls from cell phones.

Performance testing of cell phones includes a test phone from each of the wireless networks operating in Tarrant County 9-1-1 District. The 6 wireless networks are AT&T Mobility, Metro PCS, NEXTEL, SPRINT, T-MOBILE and VERIZON.

Performance testing includes every aspect of the 9-1-1 call:

- Can the caller be heard by the call taker and can the call taker be heard by the caller?
- Did the 9-1-1 call reach the intended PSAP?
- Did the PSAP get the call back number of the caller?
- Did the PSAP get the location of the caller?

Performance testing has been done in every PSAP in the district. Test calls were made from random sites on every MAPSCO page in the territory inside Tarrant County 9-1-1 District. Test calls were made from disconnected cell phones as well as working cell phones since current FCC rules allow 9-1-1 calls to be made from disconnected cell phones.

As a result of the extensive performance testing of cell phones Tarrant County 9-1-1 District has been able to prepare a customized wireless training package for call takers. This new training is greatly simplified from previous versions and is based on actual conditions in the district. Feedback from the PSAP's concerning the new wireless training has been very positive.