

911-988 INTEROPERABILITY IN WISCONSIN

BACKGROUND

The national 911 system was designed to provide a universal, easy-to-remember number for people to reach police, fire, or emergency medical assistance from any phone in any location.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national service that offers mental health and substance use support to people through calls, text, and chat. This service debuted in 2022, but previously existed as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline with a 10-digit dial-in number for calls only.

The future of quality mental health and substance use care depends on coordination between 911 and 988. People in imminent danger will continue to receive a response from 911, while those in a non-life-threatening mental health or substance use crisis can speak with a 988 counselor. This will allow 911 to focus more on public safety emergencies and less on mental health and substance use concerns.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY NUMBER ASSOCIATION (NENA) 911-988 INTEROPERABILITY STANDARDS

NENA is the professional organization focused on 911 operations, technology, education, and policy issues.

In collaboration with 988, NENA created a comprehensive document called "NENA Standard for 9-1-1/988 Interactions." This document provides recommendations and best practices for 911 and 988 to help people in crises. It outlines operational and technical considerations for Emergency Communications Centers (ECCs) and Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to establish an effective working relationship with 988.

Wisconsin PSAPs and ECCs are encouraged to review the full NENA document at www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/standards/NENA-STA-045.1-202Y_911-988_.pdf. The following are summarized section highlights about transfers, strategies for collaboration, and training.

NOTE: PSAPs decide what practices are best suited for their agency and community. Each agency or department may have different protocols depending on particular operations within an agency or department. If you have questions about adopting protocols based on these suggested best practices, please consult with your county's corporation counsel prior to implementation.

TRANSFERS FROM 988 TO 911

SECTION 3.8.5

In general, 988 counselors will maintain contact with the caller, especially with suicide in progress callers or other imminent risk situations. A 988 Wisconsin Lifeline supervisor or other staff member will attempt to contact the appropriate ECC/PSAP while the 988 counselor maintains contact with the person needing intervention.

NOTE: The 988 Wisconsin Lifeline does not directly transfer calls to 911 due to technology limitations. When 988 contacts need a 911 response, a counselor stays on the line with the person while a second counselor contacts 911. The second counselor provides information about the imminent risk situation and, if obtained, will share location details for the telecommunicator to dispatch appropriate services. 988 only engages 911 in the case of imminent danger.

TRANSFERS FROM 911 TO 988

SECTION 3.8.7

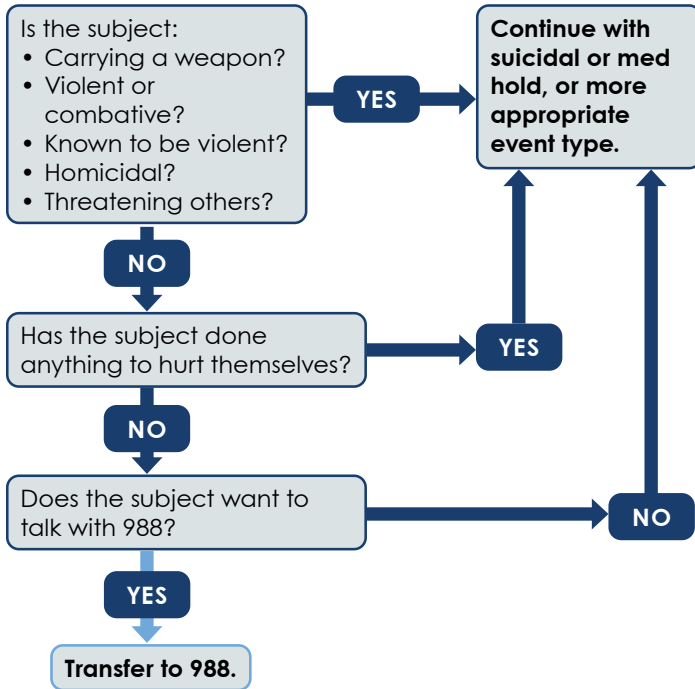
Prior to transferring a 911 caller to 988, the telecommunicator SHOULD educate the caller on the 988 resource and gain consent for the transfer. ECCs/PSAPs MAY consider transferring the following types of contacts to the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline:

- Contacts from individuals in emotional distress and not in need of emergency services.
- Contacts from individuals seeking referrals to mental health or other community resources and not in need of emergency services.
- Contacts needing connection to crisis services notified or dispatched by 988, such as mobile crisis teams.
- Contacts where emergency services are not yet on scene at the mental health emergency, and the person would like to talk to a crisis counselor while they wait.

988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT

"NENA Standard for 9-1-1/988 Interactions" offers a sample decision tree for 911 to 988 call transfers:



STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATION

SECTION 3.5.1

Establish a working relationship between 988 and 911 ECCs/PSAPs:

- Identify partners and community collaborators.
- Establish working groups to meet regularly for ongoing collaboration.
- Discuss potential call scenarios with the goal of working through processes and identifying policy and procedure needs.
- Share and formalize policies and procedures.
- Share knowledge on available local response models.
- Establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines an agreed-upon interagency workflow.
- Establish an understanding and cross-functional nature of each center with sit-alongs or site tours.
- Establish an ongoing training schedule for 988 and 911 staff.
- Identify information that can be shared with and without an MOU.
- Identify any interactions, goals, and risks in the MOU.

911 STAFF TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 3.10.1

- Provide an overview of the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline and its roles and responsibilities, including:
 - Staff qualification and/or training.
 - Acuity levels handled by counselors (example: suicidal with a plan and intent).
 - Ability to connect people with local resources.
 - Ability to dispatch alternative response teams.
 - Follow-up requirements or processes.
- Explain 988 routing for crisis conversations via all 988 contact modalities and any existing limitations regarding location awareness of 988 callers.
- Provide an overview of 988's procedures on engaging 911 services and any relevant policies, such as suicide risk assessment standards or imminent risk policies.
- Review processes and resources for imminent risk scenarios with limited information.
- Provide information about state and/or 988 Wisconsin Lifeline-specific protocols, policies, documentation requirements, and data regarding transfers between 988 and ECCs/PSAPs, such as:
 - Specific criteria or scenarios when 988 would contact the ECC/PSAP for police, medical, or fire services.
 - How the region or state will transfer from ECC/PSAP to 988 according to local procedures, and what actions the telecommunicator takes based on circumstances.
 - Required details to be shared between the 988 counselor and the ECC/PSAP telecommunicator when they are available.
- Explain where to access 988 Wisconsin Lifeline direct phone numbers.
- Seek opportunities for 911 staff to shadow and/or tour the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline and offer reciprocal opportunities to 988 staff.

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