



Personal Satellite Network, Inc.

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Satellite Telephones and 911

The 911 service in the US/Canada and 411 in some other countries have become very well know for contacting Public Emergency Services. However, when using a satellite telephone, it is important to know how 911 systems operate.

911 virtual number based on a locally provided service and implemented at the city or county level telephone switch. When someone on a local phone dials 911, the call is routed to the local emergency number programmed at your local switchboard. It was mandated that this local service be made available in telephone switches and paid for with a tax on your telephone bill. They are easy to route because it is always a local service and never leaves the local area.

When using a satellite telephone like Globalstar or Iridium, what would a 911 mean to them? Not much, except you have a problem. These are not local telephone companies; their service area coverage is continents in the case of Globalstar and the world for Iridium. Globalstar has a 911 number on their telephone switch and Iridium does not offer one. In either case, you must remember that they do not know where you are and it is unlikely that they know what the number is needed to contact local emergency services wherever you are located.

Therefore, before you go on your trip, you should write down the local emergency services that you are likely to need and keep those numbers with the phone. Programming the numbers into the telephones phone book is even a better idea.

One web site to find US emergency services contact number is; www.the911site.com. For other countries the emergency services could be on the tourist board web site or in a travel guide. You may also want the number for the US Consulate; they can be most helpful in directing you to the proper service. Also in many countries the more local a service is, the less likely English is their primary language, so have a dictionary or short guide with some important words in the local language.