



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

911-Landline Protocol

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 16.4, Foster Home Selection and Approval

The foster home approval process includes designating a landline or cell line to connect to emergency services when foster children are placed in the home.

The process of informing families of a landline/VOIP (Voice Over Internet Provider) requirement includes researching local carriers and estimating costs, which should begin in TN Knowledge Empowers You (TN KEY) training, so the foster family can start budgeting for a potentially new monthly expense.

The following steps should be taken by foster parents in coordination with the home study writer/ foster parent support or contract agency staff worker:

1. If there is a dial tone when a landline phone is plugged in:
 - Then they can dial out for 911 services and no further action is needed.

2. If no dial tone then the following actions can be taken: A. **If the family has access to high speed internet:**
 - They should sign up for VOIP. This is typically AT&T for a digital "landline" option or their cable/internet/satellite provider;
 - If there is already a local service in place that the family is using, "bundling" would be a less expensive option.
 - Once that service is connected, the family needs to call the NON-EMERGENCY line at the 911 center and arrange to make a test call to ensure their correct physical home address has been entered. If not, they will contact their service provider to have their home address added.
 - Telephone must also have a battery back-up available in the event of a power outage. Recommend a 72 hour battery backup (additional cost).

- B. **If the family does not have access to high speed internet or other barriers are encountered:**
 - Contact the regional foster parent support or contract provider staff for assistance;
 - Regional foster parent support/contract provider staff or home study writers can assist the foster parent in developing a family home emergency plan for children within the home. Use form **CS-0676 Home Safety Checklist** to confirm use of 911 or direct Cell service to 911 Assistance;
 - Regional foster parent support/contract provider staff can also assist family in connecting with local phone service providers to determine the best service for their home and phone/cell service;
 - A determination must be made regionally regarding the phone/cell connection to local 911 services and whether the specific services provide a link between the phone/cell service and the foster home physical location.

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