



August 26, 2021

## Location Accuracy Can Mean the Difference Between Life and Death

Accurate location information about a 9-1-1 call is critical to rapid and effective emergency response. In Oregon, 80 percent of 9-1-1 calls now come in via cell phone – but data from cell phone calls only provide the location of the nearest cell tower to the 9-1-1 call centers, so in rural areas the caller could be miles away from the location data point received by the center. Improving this wireless location information is key to speeding response times and saving lives in emergencies.



As such, the 9-1-1 Program within the **Oregon Office of Emergency Management** partnered with **RapidSOS** to develop an integrated statewide enterprise solution that not only provides crucial additional location data but also includes strong cybersecurity protections for the centers accessing the partnership-enabled data platform. Through their partnerships with phone manufacturers RapidSOS is able to provide additional location and sensor data information to more accurately determine a caller's location.

While many local 9-1-1 centers have separately added RapidSOS as an added service around the country, Oregon is the first state to have worked with RapidSOS as they evolved their platform into a public safety grade service and developed an integrated solution for the entire state public safety communications enterprise that allows for the sensor data transmittance to use a single entry point onto the network rather than the hundreds of entry points used when RapidSOS is a bolted on service. As a rule, fewer network access points means stronger security. The new data platform is also compliant with stringent information security standards and the data is encrypted as it is transmitted.

Additionally, when available through the statewide network, it became more cost-effective for locals than when centers were purchasing the service separately. Now, as centers go through their lifecycle technology replacements, they can easily be added to the statewide RapidSOS platform and the centers' usage can be fully funded by the state's Emergency Communications Tax (or 9-1-1 Tax).

The centers that have integrated the statewide RapidSOS option since it went live earlier this summer have already seen improved location accuracy and more timely responses to emergency callers. Time is of the essence when responding to an emergency – but through the state's partnership with RapidSOS as the company improved its platform, Oregon is now able to increase location data access while protecting its networks and ensuring state and local dollars go farther.

More information on the program in Oregon can be [found here](#).

**August 9, 1851:** *"After experiencing so many hardships, you doubtless will think I regret taking this long and tiresome trip, and would rather go back than proceed to the end of my journey. But, no, I have a great desire to see Oregon, and besides, there are many things we meet with—the beautiful scenery of plain and mountain, and their inhabitants, the wild animals and the Indians, and natural curiosities in abundance—to compensate us for the hardships and mishaps we encounter. People who do come must. . . put up with storm and cloud as well as calm and sunshine; wade through rivers, climb steep hills, often go hungry, keep cool and good natured always, and possess courage and ingenuity equal to any emergency, and they will be able to endure unto the end. A lazy person should never think of going to Oregon."*

*Excerpt from the diary of Elizabeth Wood traveling the Oregon Trail*

*If you would like more information or have a state practice you'd like to highlight as part of this ongoing series, please contact Lauren Goodwillie.*

[nemaweb.org](http://nemaweb.org)



Copyright NEMA 2021. All rights reserved.