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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS  
PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES




H. "BUTCH" BROWNING, JR.  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

**LICENSING MEMORANDUM 7-2021**

DATE: November 10, 2021

TO: Life Safety and Property Protection Contracting Industry

FROM: Erin E. St. Pierre, Deputy Chief   
Special Services Division

APPROVED: H. "Butch" Browning, Jr., State Fire Marshal

RE: 988 Dialing Changes

As you know, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated a change in the manner in which people who may be in need of suicide prevention counseling to phone the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by dialing 988 instead of 1-800-273-TALK (8255), which is the current method of calling. This change is scheduled to take effect on July 16, 2022.

While we are in full support of the need to simplify calling a helpful resource for those in need, this change, which has affected over thirty-six (36) states, requires that in order to phone customers who have a 988 prefix the area code must be included when calling. In Louisiana, this has unfortunately impacted thousands of life safety and property protection systems in private and commercial structures in the 337 and 504 area codes, respectively.

Factors, such as a lack of timely notification of the impending changes, COVID-19, unavailability of needed system parts for reprogramming and/or replacement, and the devastating effects of hurricanes in 2020 and 2021, have resulted in an insufficient time during which the reprogramming of these vital systems can be accomplished.

State Fire Marshal Browning has been in consultation regarding this matter with the major carriers in Louisiana, AT&T and Cox Communications, both of which have expressed a desire to assist in requesting a delay from the FCC in the implementation of the calling changes mentioned above, specifically, to delay the implementation by three (3) months—to October 2022—in order to provide more time for our industry partners to complete the reprogramming of all life safety and property protection systems in the 337 and 504 area codes.

In order to assist Marshal Browning, I am asking that you provide this Office with the number of systems that are in need of reprogramming, replacement, etc., as a result of the FCC mandate. This information will support our request for a delay in the implementation of the mandate. Please send an email with the number of affected system to the email [sfm\\_lsplicensing@la.gov](mailto:sfm_lsplicensing@la.gov).

In closing, we are determined to continue fighting with you in seeking a delay in the mandate as this change could have catastrophic effects if not extended. We will keep you posted as to any progress in this matter.

Thank you so much for the passion you display every single day in helping to protect the people, families and businesses of this state.