

FCC Mandates New 911 Location Reporting Rules for Wireless Carriers

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The Federal Communications Commission unanimously voted on Jan. 29 to enact new rules that will require wireless carriers to provide more accurate location information to first responders when people call 911. But some say the new rules are nominal and won't change anything for years.

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler said the new rules are just the beginning of the improvement, which also aims to provide location information of callers who are inside multi-story buildings.

"We should not be satisfied with a situation where Uber can consistently find a user's house via an app, but the EMT's location fix is within half a football field 80 percent of the time," Wheeler [said](#). "I hope our efforts will encourage app developers to work with the public safety community to develop an 'Uber for 911.'"

The new rules being enacted are based on a plan outlined in a letter ([PDF](#)) from CTIA - The Wireless Association and agreed to by the four major wireless carriers. The plan requires that within two years, carriers must transmit 911 caller position accurate to within 50 meters to the 911 call center in at least 40 percent of cases. Within five years, carriers must transmit that location information accurately within 60 percent of cases.

The FCC will not mandate the specific use of any definitive technology, but will allow carriers to find their own technologies to meet the requirements. Vendors like NextNav and TruePosition provide indoor GPS solutions.

CTIA, PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association, and the Telecommunications Industry Association praised the FCC ruling, noting that it will help save lives as first responders reach people in need faster. The Find Me 911 Coalition, which [petitioned](#) the FCC for improvements in 911 location services in late 2013, was less pleased with the mandate.

"We have deep concerns that the final rule contains a catastrophic flaw, as it does not require the cellphone companies to measure or report indoor call accuracy," [said](#) Jamie Barnett, head of the Find Me 911 Coalition. "While the rule claims to improve indoor accuracy, there appear to be no indoor-specific requirements in it, only a 'blended' indoor-outdoor standard that allows the carriers to take credit for their outdoor location performance. Thus, the phone companies can meet all of their obligations for years or longer without implementing any new technologies or finding any more indoor callers."

<http://www.govtech.com/public-safety/FCC-Mandates-New-911-Location-Reporting-Rules-for-Wireless-Carriers.html>