

No. 1978-42

AN ACT

HB 72

Providing for the development of a Statewide emergency telephone number "911" system plan and establishing the Bureau of Telecommunications with the duties and responsibilities for all telecommunications with State Government.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Emergency Telephone Act."

Section 2. Legislative intent.

The Legislature hereby finds and declares that it is in the public interest to shorten the time required for a citizen to request and receive emergency aid. There currently exist thousands of different emergency phone numbers throughout the Commonwealth. Providing for a single, primary three-digit emergency number through which emergency services can be quickly and efficiently obtained would provide a significant contribution to law enforcement and other public efforts by making it easier to notify emergency center personnel. Such a simplified means of procuring emergency services will result in the saving of life, and reduction in the destruction of property, and quicker apprehension of criminals. It is the intent of the Legislature to establish and implement a cohesive Statewide emergency telephone number "911" plan which will provide citizens with rapid direct access to public emergency operation centers by dialing the telephone number "911," with the objective of reducing the response time to situations requiring law enforcement, fire, medical, rescue, and other emergency services. It is the intent of the Legislature that said plan be reviewed and enacted into law after proper consideration by the Legislature.

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the meanings given to them in this section:

"Bureau" means the element of telecommunications assigned by the Governor to a statutory administrative department. The director shall report directly to the cabinet level officer or in the time of emergency, to the Lieutenant Governor for the duration of that emergency.

"Local government" means any political subdivision or any combination or group thereof.

"Public agency" means the State, and any city, county, city and county, municipal corporation, chartered organization, public district, or public

authority located in whole or in part within this Commonwealth which provides or has authority to provide fire fighting, law enforcement, ambulance, medical, or other emergency services.

“Public safety agency” means a functional division of a public agency which provides fire fighting, law enforcement, medical, or other emergency services.

Section 4. State plan.

The bureau shall develop a Statewide emergency telephone number “911” system plan, which shall be submitted to the Legislature within 18 months of the effective date of this act for proposed enactment. The plan shall provide for:

(1) The public agency emergency telephone communications requirements for each entity of local government in the State.

(2) A system to meet specific local government requirements. Such system shall include law enforcement, fire fighting, and emergency medical services, and may include other emergency services such as poison control, suicide prevention, and civil defense services.

(3) Identification of existing “911” systems in operation. Additionally, recommendations for coordinating existing “911” systems and new systems necessitated by the Statewide plan shall be part of the plan.

(4) The identification of the mutual aid agreements necessary to obtain an effective “911” system.

(5) A cost analysis which shall identify the costs necessary to establish and operate a Statewide “911” system both at the State and local government levels.

(6) Recommendations as to how said costs shall be paid and from which sources of revenue. Additionally, the plan shall identify and delineate all existing Federal, State, local, and private funding sources available.

(7) A proposed schedule for full implementation of the Statewide emergency telephone number “911” system plan. The schedule shall be designated to permit orderly implementation and accommodate local variances.

Section 5. Bureau functions and responsibilities.

The statutory administrative department designated by the Governor to carry out the purposes of this act shall publish, in accordance with the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.769, No.240), known as the “Commonwealth Documents Law,” the plan and proposed implementation schedules relating to public agencies for implementing and administering the plan for public comment and review. The bureau shall have a director and technical staff who are telecommunication professionals certified and employed through the Civil Service Commission with the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of this act. The director shall coordinate the plan development and implementation of the system with State, county, local, and private agencies. For the purposes of this act, the director is authorized

to employ professional and clerical persons in such staff capacities as required for administrative or project team operations and to hire professional consultants pursuant to the limitations prescribed in the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as "The Administrative Code of 1929". The director shall also coordinate with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and with the Pennsylvania telephone utility or utilities involved for a timely implementation of "911". Nothing contained in this act shall be construed, or is intended to be construed, to limit the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission over the Pennsylvania telephone utility involved or in such utility's participation in said implementation of "911".

Section 6. Funding.

The funds necessary to support the functions, duties and responsibilities of all telecommunications services and support activities of the Commonwealth for the fiscal year 1977-1978 shall be transferred from the appropriate budgets to the statutory department designated by the Governor. Future years funding shall be provided by the agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction, equipment and/or support.

Section 7. Effective date.

This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 28th day of April, A. D. 1978.

MILTON J. SHAPP

Editorial Note. The bureau created in Act 1978-42 was assigned by the Governor to the Pennsylvania State Police.