

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 576

(Senator Pugh)

Finance

Health and Government Operations

**9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System - Multiple-Line Telephone Systems - Direct
Dial (Kari's Law)**

This bill requires that, by December 31, 2017, a person that installs or operates a “multiple-line telephone system” ensure that the system is connected to the public switched telephone network in such a way that when an individual using the system dials 9-1-1, the call connects to the public safety answering point without requiring the user to dial any other number or set of numbers. Executive Branch units are exempt from compliance until the date of the next upgrade of the unit’s multiple-line telephone system.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures may increase by approximately \$50,300 to \$108,800, over time, to reprogram State telephone systems at the time of the next system upgrade. It is assumed that costs in any given fiscal year are relatively minimal. It is also assumed that any additional costs for new systems installed after December 31, 2017, are negligible. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local expenditures to reprogram telephone systems may increase in some jurisdictions. Revenues are not affected. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Meaningful. Any small businesses in the State with a multiple-line telephone system must reprogram its existing system to comply with the bill by the end of 2017. Thus, costs likely increase. Any new systems installed after 2017 must also comply with the bill’s requirements.

Analysis

Bill Summary: A “multiple-line telephone system” means a system that (1) consists of common control units, telephone sets, control hardware and software, and adjunct systems, including network and premises-based systems and (2) is designed to aggregate more than one incoming voice communication channel for use by more than one telephone.

Current Law: Neither federal nor State law requires 9-1-1 direct dialing features covered under the bill.

Each county is required to have in operation an enhanced 9-1-1 system which provides automatic number and location identification. The Emergency Number Systems Board in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) coordinates the enhancement of county 9-1-1 systems. The 9-1-1 system is paid for by a 9-1-1 fee which is assessed on landline and wireless telephone bills (\$0.25 per month).

Background: The term “Kari’s Law” is in honor of Kari Rene Hunt Dunn, who was stabbed to death in 2014 inside a hotel room in Texas, allegedly by her estranged husband. Although her daughter could hear that her mother was in serious trouble, she did not realize that she first had to dial “9” for an outside line before dialing 9-1-1. Ms. Dunn’s father has launched a national petition campaign to require hotels and other businesses to do away with dialing any other numbers before dialing 9-1-1 by upgrading enhanced 9-1-1 systems in a way that would let hotel or office guests call for help just by dialing 9-1-1.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA), which represents 9-1-1 call takers and industry professionals, agrees that such changes are needed. To that end, NENA has revised its model legislation recommendations for multi-line telephone systems to advocate a system in which:

- callers to 9-1-1 are able to reach help directly and immediately, with no other dialing codes or prefixes;
- precise, accurate location data is delivered automatically with every 9-1-1 call;
- systems are in place to provide on-site notifications, so that a front desk clerk; receptionist, or other “gatekeeper” will be alerted to 9-1-1 calls made from the premises and can help direct first responders to the scene of the emergency; and
- policymakers ban “local termination” of 9-1-1 calls, in which callers are routed to a front desk or guard station, rather than the appropriate local 9-1-1 center.

NENA’s full report on model legislation for multi-line telephone systems can be found [here](#).

Generally, State agencies do not contract directly with telephone service providers. The Department of Budget and Management is responsible for the contracts relating to the use of telephones at all State facilities, including State correctional facilities.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures may increase by varying amounts for all Executive Branch units to reprogram telephone systems by December 31, 2017. Total estimated upgrade costs of between \$50,300 and \$108,800 for all Executive Branch units are spread over time and are assumed to be relatively minimal in any given fiscal year. It is also assumed that any additional costs for new systems installed after December 31, 2017, are negligible.

Executive Branch Agencies

When the State's private branch exchange (PBX) telephone systems for the Executive Branch were originally configured, some systems within the Department of Information Technology's (DoIT) PBX network were programmed at that time to send both 9-9-1-1 and 9-1-1 calls to the 9-1-1 public safety answering point.

According to DoIT, there are about 300 to 400 PBX systems in State facilities that could require an upgrade due to the bill's requirements, including 80 facility sites under DPSCS. Based on information provided by a PBX manufacturer and a master contractor, DoIT estimates that compliance with the bill for most Executive Branch agencies requires between one and two hours of reprogramming to current telephone software configurations. The average cost per PBX is estimated to range between \$75 and \$200. While the actual number of State PBX systems that need reprogramming is unknown, DoIT estimates that costs increase by between \$50,300 and \$108,800 statewide, which includes approximately \$28,800 for the 80 facilities under DPSCS.

However, because the bill waives compliance for Executive Branch units until the date that a multiple-line telephone system of the unit is next upgraded, these costs are incurred over time. Because DoIT does not know the number of systems that are upgraded in fiscal 2016, or any given year, actual costs for compliance in any given year are unknown.

Legislative Branch Agencies

The PBX system at the State House in Annapolis is already configured to comply with the bill's requirements. For the General Assembly offices and the Department of Legislative Services, including the Office of Legislative Audits, the bill's requirements can be accommodated within a few days at a minimal cost of about \$140.

The Judiciary

The Administrative Office of the Courts advises that all State offices of the Judiciary, including all District Court locations, are already in compliance with the bill.

Local Fiscal Effect: Some local government agencies may already be compliant with the bill. However, to the extent that reconfigurations of local government multi-line telephone systems are necessary, some local governments may incur additional costs to reprogram their systems.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1080 (Delegate Pena-Melnyk, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Harford, Montgomery, and Wicomico counties; Baltimore City; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Information Technology; Department of General Services; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Public Service Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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