**<u>Quick Facts on Text-to-911</u>**
September 24, 2018

Text to 911 is intended primarily for use in two emergency scenarios:

- For an individual who is speech or hearing impaired and…
- For a person who is unable to make a voice call, for example during a medical emergency that renders the person incapable of speech, or in the instance of a home invasion, domestic violence, or abduction.

Residents should use the texting option only when calling 911 is NOT an option.

**911: call if you can, text if you can't.**

Using a phone to call 911 is still the most efficient way to reach emergency help.

- Texting is not always instantaneous, which is critical during a life-threatening emergency.
- It will take longer to dispatch emergency services in a text to 911 situation because of the time involved:
  - Someone must enter the text, the message must go over the network and the 911 telecommunicator must read the text and then text back.
- Residents must be in range of cell towers in the Broome County area. If you are outside or near the edge of the county, the message may not reach the Broome County Communications Center.
  - In these cases, the resident will receive a "Bounce Back" message advising them to make a voice call to 9-1-1.
  - In cases where the phone does not have an adequate GPS signal, the resident will receive a "Bounce Back" message as well.

Here are some guidelines for residents to follow:

1. Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative, since the Broome County Communications Center will receive only an approximate location of the cell phone, and will not be able to speak with the person sending the text.
2. Text abbreviations or slang should never be used so that the intent of the dialogue can be as clear as possible.
3. Text messages sent to 911 have the same character limit as other text messages.
4. Text-to-911 should only be used to communicate between emergency help and the texter with no pictures, video, other attachments or other recipients appended to the message.