

## I 988/911 FAQ

**1. Q: If someone calls 988 will first responders, such as emergency medical services (EMS) or law enforcement, automatically be dispatched?**

**A:** California envisions a behavioral health crisis hotline where those struggling with mental health related distress can access support and de-escalation strategies in a person-centered, non-restrictive manner. If a person is experiencing a medical emergency, they may require immediate transport to a hospital.

If callers are experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis (or concerned loved ones) and need a public safety and/or emergency medical service intervention, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline call center may transfer a caller to 911 to ensure the caller's health and safety. Fewer than 2% of 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline calls currently require connection to emergency services such as 911. Conversely, if a caller dials 911 but is not in imminent danger (e.g., a suicide attempt is not in progress), 911 calls may be transferred to 988.

In some communities, the 988 line may be connected with local mobile crisis teams. However, this is not yet available consistently throughout the state and callers should check with their local county behavioral health agency regarding the availability of mobile crisis services in their community.

**2. Q: How is 988 different from 911??**

**A:** 988 is an easy-to-remember number that connects callers to suicide and mental health related crisis support through one of California's existing 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline services. 911 is focused on addressing public safety concerns and emergencies (e.g., dispatching EMS, fire department, and law enforcement).

**3. Q: Will 988 calls be referred to 911?**

**A:** 988 call center counselors are trained to provide person-centered mental health support in the least restrictive manner possible. California is also building its capacity to provide similar support for substance use related crises. However, in situations where there is imminent risk to someone's life that is beyond counselor intervention, counselors may share information with 911 that is necessary to save the caller's life.

**4. Q: How will 988 and 911 complement one another?**

**A:** In the future, California envisions a coordinated crisis response system where 911 call center staff and 988 call center counselors are trained to identify callers' needs and seamlessly refer callers to the most appropriate service.

California's Health and Human Service Agency is facilitating an active collaboration process between 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline call centers, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, counties, and other key stakeholders to create appropriate standards for 988-911 interoperability.

**5. Q: Will geolocation services be enacted?**

**A:** 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifelines currently route calls to the nearest crisis center using the caller's area code. This is distinct from 911, which uses cellular towers and geolocation services to better understand the location of the caller. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently exploring the key issues and potential next steps for inclusion of geolocation services as part of 988; however, California has not yet received federal guidance on this topic.

**6. Q: Is 988 pulling funds away from 911?**

**A:** Federal funding for 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifelines is separate from federal funding for the 911 system. California has funded implementation of 988 through a series of one-time state and local grants, which are also separate from 911 funding. State and local support of both 988 and 911 are necessary to advance the well-being of our communities.