



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 9-1-1 SERVICE

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Mandate commitment of the 20th Legislative Assembly

Government of
Northwest Territories



Une version française de ce document est disponible.

K'ákshó got'jne xáda k'é hederi ḡedjhtl'é yeriniwé ni dé dúle.
Dene Kádá

Ɂerih̄t̄'is Dene Sųliné yati t'a huts'elkér xa beyáyatı thez̄ pat'e, nuwe ts'ën yólti.
Dene Sųliné

Edi gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'éé edat'eh enahddhé nide naxets'é edahtí.
Dene Zhatié

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'u zhit yinohthan jí', diits'at ginohkhii.
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

Съдът на народните съдии и арбитри във външните съдилища, съдът на народните съдии и арбитри във външните съдилища.

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnagtun

kīspin ki nitawihtin ē nīhiyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
nēhiyawēwin

Tłjchö yati k'ęè. Dì wegodi newq dè, gots'o gonede.
Tłjchö

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Minister's Message

I am pleased to present the NWT 9-1-1 Annual Report for the 2023–2024 fiscal year, in compliance with the *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act*. This report provides detailed statistical, financial, and performance information regarding the operation of the territorial 9-1-1 service for the period from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year, NWT 9-1-1 focused on continuous improvement by regularly updating standard operating procedures and protocols to address the unique circumstances and needs of our territory, as well as incorporating feedback from stakeholders. The team at NWT 9-1-1 remains adaptable and responsive, consistently supporting residents in the face of daily challenges and evolving requirements.

The 2023 wildfire season was unprecedented in its intensity and scale. Despite the significant challenges posed by this crisis, including the evacuation of Yellowknife, NWT 9-1-1 maintained consistent and reliable service throughout the period. This would not have been possible without the people behind 9-1-1 who went above and beyond professionally while being impacted personally. This resilience underscores the commitment of our team and the effectiveness of our emergency response protocols.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many emergency service providers in the Northwest Territories who work diligently to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and visitors alike. I also deeply appreciate the collaborative efforts of our valued partners, whose commitment to public safety is integral to our shared mission.



The Honourable Vince McKay
Minister, Municipal and Community Affairs

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Executive Summary

For the 2023–2024 fiscal year, NWT 9-1-1 received 17,238 calls and processed 12,126 emergency calls: 13% (2297) were for emergency medical services, 53% (9152) were for policing services, 2% (392) were for fire/rescue services, 2% (285) were for combined services and 29% (5102) were non-emergent, including hang-ups. There were an additional 10 calls supporting the Emergency Management Office (EMO) and the Office of the Fire Marshall (OFM) on their 24/7 duty phone line.

The budget for the NWT 9-1-1 service was \$1.286 million and actual costs of providing NWT 9-1-1 services totalled just over \$1.6 million. Revenue generated by the cost recovery fee revenue for 2023-24 was \$948,308.15, which is slightly lower than previous years.

NWT 9-1-1 is dedicated to delivering a high level of service by adhering to international standards and protocols, which are evidence-based. This commitment is supported by engaging community service providers and program leaders who ensure safe, effective, and fiscally responsible operations. The presence of Fire Officers and a contracted Medical Director also plays a crucial role in maintaining these high standards, ensuring that all aspects of emergency response are managed effectively and efficiently.

Introduction

The *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* (Act) was passed in May 2019. The Act and Regulations came into effect and the NWT 9-1-1 system went live in November 2019.

The *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 2023-2024 Annual Report* was prepared in accordance with the Act and provides the following information from the 2023-24 fiscal year (April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024):

- Call data including:
 - The total number of 9-1-1 calls received.
 - Calls in each official language of the Northwest Territories.
 - Calls received in each month.
 - Calls received from each community/region.
- Financial data including:
 - Total funds collected through a cost recovery fee.
 - A breakdown of the operational costs of the service.
- Information regarding the performance of the service.

NWT 9-1-1 Service

The vision of NWT 9-1-1 is to provide the public, communities and first responders with an effective emergency communications service for access to police, fire, rescue, and medical services when immediate action is required. The goals of the service are:

- To provide evidence and standards-based 9-1-1 pre-arrival, dispatch life support, and post-dispatch instruction to callers, ensuring the highest level of patient safety possible.
- To provide evidence and standards-based 9-1-1 call processing and dispatch requests to appropriate response agencies.
- To provide and maintain NWT 9-1-1 infrastructure including the equipment, networks, and databases required to operate a reliable 9-1-1 system.
- To increase public awareness of 9-1-1 and promote the proper use of the NWT 9-1-1 service.

- To provide 9-1-1 services in an effective and fiscally responsible manner.

Key elements of the NWT 9-1-1 service include:

- *Legislation:* The Act and Regulations define the NWT 9-1-1 service, the requirements for telecommunication carriers and emergency service providers to participate in the service, the powers of the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, reporting requirements, and cost recovery fees.
- *Emergency Communications Centre:* the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) emergency services location, which is designed to meet federal critical infrastructure requirements and a multitude of facility, telecommunication, and informatics standards. The Emergency Communications Centre (ECC) is currently home to both the NWT 9-1-1 service and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Med-Response Program, which dispatches Northwest Territories (NWT) air ambulances.
- *Evaluation and continuous improvement:* NWT 9-1-1 participates in third-party quality assurance involving randomized reviews of 20% of all fire and medical calls per week. Resulting reports are used to identify areas for improvement and target continuing education needs.
- *Public Awareness:* NWT 9-1-1 is preparing an education program targeting when and how to use 9-1-1 services effectively and responsibly. The content focuses on determining the types of emergencies that warrant a 9-1-1 call, and how to provide accurate information to dispatchers.

Key services delivered by NWT 9-1-1 include:

- Telephone dispatch of first responder services when immediate action is required (when someone's health, safety or property is in jeopardy, or a crime is in progress).
- Pre-arrival and dispatch life support instructions for medical and fire emergencies (how to do CPR, deliver a baby, help someone choking, etc.).
- Triage of calls to identify and recommend dispatch responses to available community fire, rescue, and ambulance services.
- Supervised transfers to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and ongoing medical/fire life support instruction when applicable.
- Provision of services in English and French.

- Interpretation services for callers using one of the NWT's official languages or over 200 other languages using CANTALK services.
- Use of technologies to connect with callers who have hearing or speech communication impairments.

2023-2024 Operational Overview

NWT 9-1-1 Services

Dialing 9-1-1 in the NWT connects callers to the Emergency Communication Centre (ECC) in Yellowknife. The ECC is the Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the NWT and is staffed 24/7 with bilingual, certified medical and fire emergency dispatchers. All callers are asked which service they require (police, fire, or ambulance), the location of the emergency, and what phone number they are calling from.

Callers requesting policing services are then transferred to the RCMP. NWT 9-1-1 is available to provide on-the-line medical support for the RCMP when needed.

Callers requesting fire or rescue services in the Town of Hay River and the Town of Inuvik are then transferred to a secondary PSAP based out of Alberta for call processing and dispatch service, per existing contract agreements between these towns and southern PSAPs.

Callers requesting fire or rescue services in the Yellowknife area are transferred to the City of Yellowknife's Public Safety Communication Centre for call processing and dispatch services.

All other fire and medical calls are processed by NWT 9-1-1 dispatchers and provided the appropriate pre-arrival care and dispatch life support until first responders arrive.

Bilingual and Interpretation Services

NWT 9-1-1 provides bilingual services in English and French and connects with CANTALK for interpretation services for NWT Indigenous and other languages. Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, NWT 9-1-1 processed one call in French, and no calls in NWT official Indigenous languages.

NWT 9-1-1 Call Volumes

For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, NWT 9-1-1 received 17,238 calls, of which 12,126 were considered emergent. Call received were comprised as follows:

- 13% (2297) were for emergency medical services,

- 53% (9152) were for policing services,
- 2% (392) were for fire/rescue services,
- 2% (285) were for combined services,
- 29% (5102) were non-emergent, including hang-ups.

There were an additional 10 calls supporting the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and Office of the Fire Marshall (OFM). NWT 9-1-1 staff answered their 24/7 duty phone line to collect pertinent information and pass it on to the appropriate personnel.

The call classification of “non-emergent” includes general information calls, miscellaneous, and caller hang-ups. Except for suspicious caller hang-ups, NWT 9-1-1 does not normally dispatch an emergency response to this type of call but does provide some level of service, support, or call back.

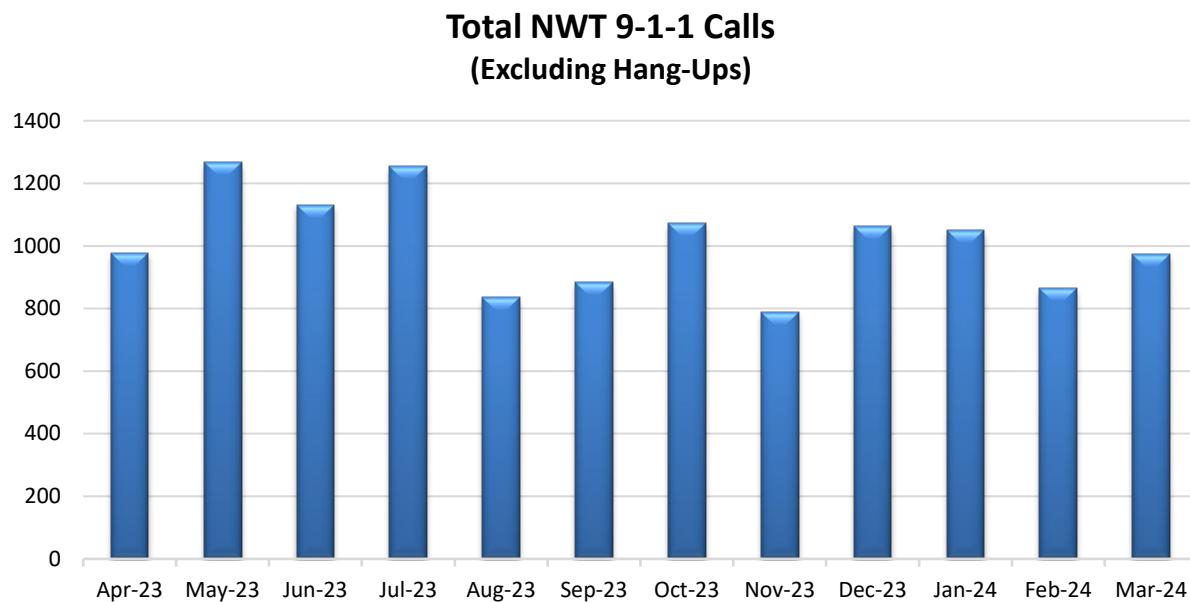
Call Types
April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024



	2023-2024 Fiscal Year
Emergency Medical Services	2,297
RCMP	9,152
Fire / Rescue Services	392
Fire / Medical / RCMP Combination	285
Non-Emergent	5,102
Support for EMO and OFM	10
Total Inbound Calls	17,238

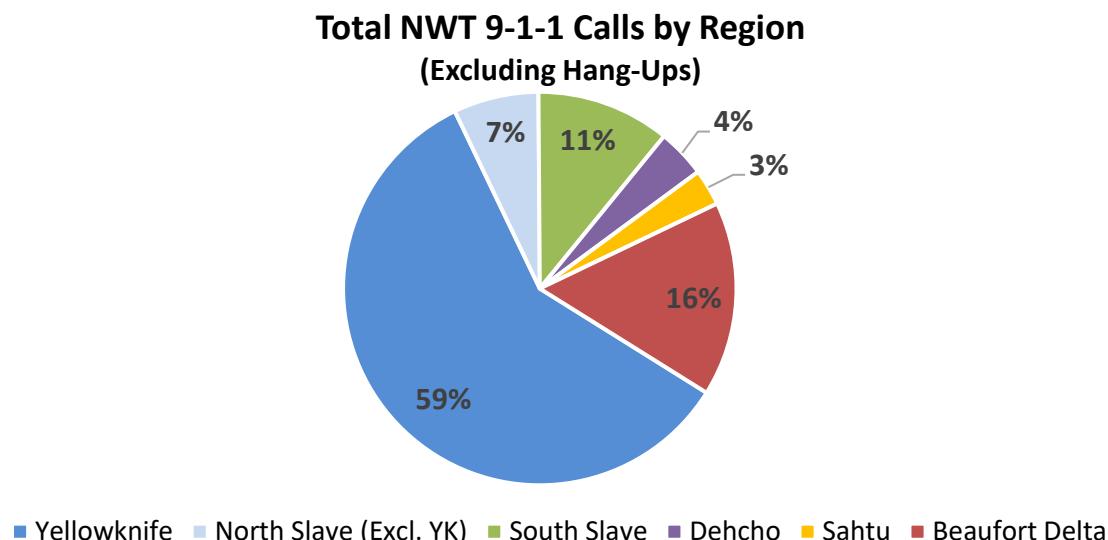
Call Volumes by Month

The chart below illustrates the total number of emergent 9-1-1 calls received per month in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



Call Volumes by Region

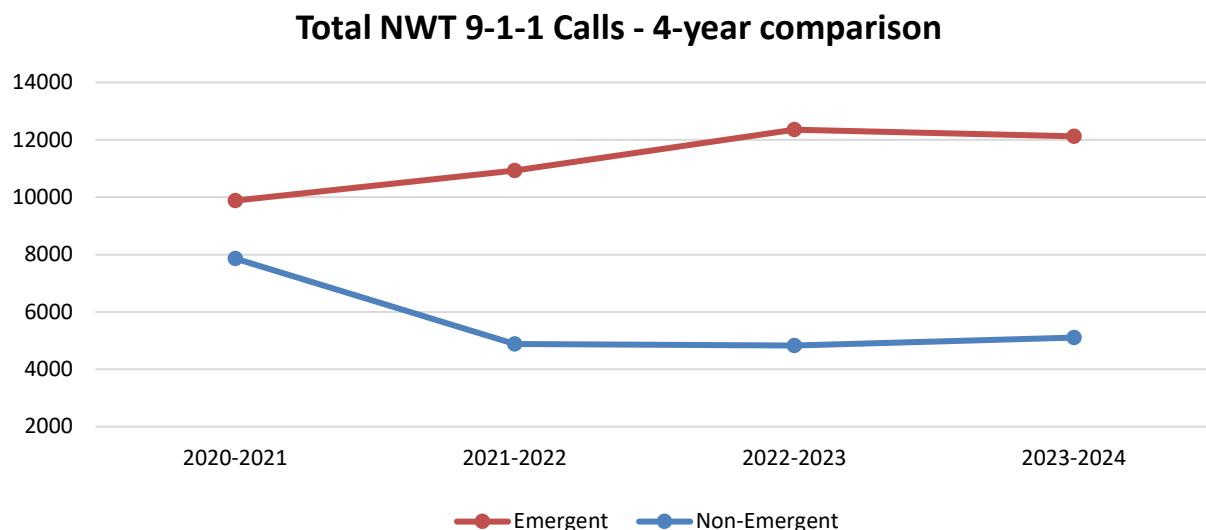
The below chart indicates a regional breakdown of all emergent 9-1-1 calls received in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. For illustrative purposes, Yellowknife has been separated from the North Slave region to provide further detail, as more than half of 9-1-1 calls in 2023-24 originated from Yellowknife.



Historical Trends

NWT 9-1-1 call volume has remained relatively consistent over the last four fiscal years (2020-21 to 2023-24), with a slight overall increase in calls. The chart below illustrates the total number of emergent and non-emergent calls for each fiscal year within this period.

Notably, there was a significant decrease in non-emergent calls between the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years. This decline in non-emergent call volume has since stabilized, which is viewed as a positive development. This trend suggests that as residents have become more accustomed to the 9-1-1 program and as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has lessened, users have tended to call 9-1-1 less for reasons outside the service's scope. The data reflects a more informed public and an effective adaptation to the emergency response system.



NWT 9-1-1 Operational Costs

Financial Performance

The table below provides a summary of the financial performance of NWT 9-1-1 in 2023-24, including the budget (Main Estimates), 2023-24 actuals, and 2022-23 actuals for comparison.

9-1-1 Program Budget	2023-2024 Main Estimates	2023-2024 Actuals	2022-2023 Actuals
Expenditure Category			
Compensation and Benefits	971,000	1,380,970	1,376,750
Other Expenses	303,000	245,869	393,175
Equipment Amortization	12,000	12,400	12,400
Total	1,286,000	1,639,239	1,782,325
Revenue Category			
Call Answer Levy*	1,027,000	948,308	965,247

*Cost Recovery Fee is referred to as the Call Answer Levy in the GNWT Main Estimates.

Expenditure and revenue categories related to the operation of NWT 9-1-1 in 2023-2024 include:

- **Compensation and Benefits:** NWT 9-1-1 core staff funding is for one manager, one system specialist, and five full-time dispatchers. These five full-time dispatchers represent the minimum staffing required to have a single dispatcher on shift 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Other expenses:** The NWT 9-1-1 program utilizes specialized integrated hardware as well as specialized applications to provide dispatch and pre-arrival dispatch life support services. These applications include computer-aided dispatch, medical protocol and support, fire protocol and support, digital call loggers and system interoperability applications. Additionally, NWT 9-1-1 contracts a third-party quality assurance call review. This involves randomized reviews of 20% of all fire and medical calls per week.
- **Call Answer Levy:** A cost recovery fee of \$1.70 per month for each subscriber is in effect in the NWT, as established by the *Act*. The cost recovery fee revenue for 2023-24 was \$948,308.15 which is down slightly from the previous year. This change is due to the fact that there are fewer NWT subscribers than estimated when NWT 9-1-1 was originally established. Total cost recovery fees can change from year to year based on the number of subscribers registered in the NWT. This fee was fixed for the first three years of operation, however, on January 1, 2025, the fee will be increasing to \$3.00 per month in order to cover actual program operational costs that have been observed.

NWT 9-1-1 Service Highlights

2023 Wildfires

NWT 9-1-1 provided continuous, uninterrupted 9-1-1 service throughout the unprecedented 2023 wildfire season, including the evacuation of Yellowknife where the 9-1-1 ECC is located. NWT 9-1-1 quickly coordinated and executed a plan to relocate operations outside the evacuation zone, ensuring service continuity. This required dispatchers to balance family and work responsibilities under stress, work extended shifts to cover for colleagues traveling to and from the evacuation site, and to adapt to a new phone and computer system in a different environment, demonstrating incredible flexibility and resilience.

Basic 9-1-1

NWT 9-1-1 is considered a Basic 9-1-1 telecommunication system as it is hosted on legacy telecommunications infrastructure and systems. While residents in every NWT community can call 9-1-1, callers are required to identify their community, their call back number, and the location of the incident to NWT 9-1-1. NWT 9-1-1 does use Emergency Location Services tools such as RapidSOS which automatically identifies global positioning coordinates for some cellular phones when dialling into 9-1-1. However, NWT 9-1-1 still relies on the caller to provide and confirm locational information, which in many cases can be problematic because callers may not know or be able to identify where they are.

NWT 9-1-1 is currently exploring the logistics required to implement B9-1-1+, which would give registered users the ability to text to 9-1-1. This would be considered an upgrade from the existing teletypewriter (TTY) software. The timeline for this transition has not yet been confirmed.

Next Generation 9-1-1

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulates the telecommunications carriers who supply the network needed to direct and connect 9-1-1 calls to 9-1-1 centres. Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) is a national initiative aimed at updating the national 9-1-1 service infrastructure to improve public emergency communications services including location accuracy. In addition, NG 9-1-1 will enable callers to interact with 9-1-1 call centres using new and innovative means such as text messaging and the transmission of photos and videos.

Many provinces that are pursuing NG 9-1-1 are transitioning from Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1), which automatically provides the 9-1-1 PSAPs with the caller's phone number and location. The transition is more straightforward in these regions due to their existing E9-1-1 infrastructure. However, in the Northwest Territories and other rural areas still utilizing Basic 9-1-1, the shift to NG 9-1-1 presents additional challenges. The vast and remote geography complicates the development of the necessary infrastructure required for NG 9-1-1 capabilities. As of now, there is no established timeline for NWT 9-1-1 to complete the transition to NG 9-1-1.

Conclusion

NWT 9-1-1 works as part of an integrated system that includes the RCMP and first responder organizations in all communities throughout the territory. The program includes quality control and continuous improvement processes to ensure the program strives to meet international standards, and to ensure that services keep pace with the changing needs of NWT residents.

NWT 9-1-1 welcomes input from stakeholders and the public on issues, concerns and potential improvements.

Contact Information

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