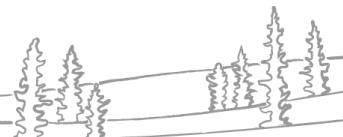




NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 9-1-1 SERVICE

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Government of
Northwest Territories



Une version française de ce document est disponible.

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
Cree

Tłichǫ yatı k'ęę. Dı wegodi newo dę, gots'o gonede.
Tłichǫ

Perihtl'is Dëne Sųłiné yati t'a huts'elkér xa beyáyatı theʔq̥ ɬat'e, nuwe ts'ën yólti.
Chipewyan

Edí gondí dehgáh got'je zhatié k'éé edat'eh enahddhé níde naxets'é edahtí.
Dene Zhatié

K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederi Ɂedjhtl'é yeriniwé nídé dúle.
North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan ji', diits'at ginohkhìi.
Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs: 867-767-9162 ext. 21044
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Minister's Message

I am pleased to present the NWT 9-1-1 Annual Report for the 2024–2025 fiscal year, in accordance with the *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act*. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the operational, financial, and performance aspects of the territory's 9-1-1 service from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

In November 2024, NWT 9-1-1 marked five years of service. This milestone offered a moment to reflect on how far the program has come in supporting public safety across the territory. Over the past five years, NWT 9-1-1 has grown into a trusted, territory-wide service, helping connect residents and visitors with emergency support when they need it most.



Throughout the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the program continued to focus on service improvement, operational readiness, and the modernization of critical infrastructure. Work has started towards a significant capital project that would see the implementation of a new NG9-1-1-ready Computer-Aided Dispatch and phone systems by 2027. These investments would be a key part of preparing the NWT for the national transition to Next Generation 9-1-1.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the NWT 9-1-1 team for their dedication and professionalism. Their work ensures that residents in all 33 communities have access to life-saving emergency services. I also acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of our emergency service partners, who respond every day to protect the health and safety of people across the Northwest Territories.

Together, we continue to build a strong, reliable, and responsive emergency communication service for the territory.

The Honourable Vince McKay
Minister, Municipal and Community Affairs

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Executive Summary

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, NWT 9-1-1 received a total of 16,916 calls, of which 12,039 were classified as emergency. The breakdown of emergency calls is as follows:

- 15% (2,527) were for emergency medical services
- 52% (8,870) were for policing services
- 2% (361) were for fire/rescue services
- 2% (281) were for combined services
- 29% (4,857) were non-emergency, including hang-ups

Non-emergency calls, including hang-ups, general inquiries, and other calls not requiring emergency response, accounted for 29 percent (4,857) of total calls. In addition, NWT 9-1-1 supported the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) by handling 20 calls through their 24/7 duty phone line.

NWT 9-1-1 operated with a budget of \$1.6 million but incurred actual costs slightly exceeding \$1.8 million, due in part to increased operating and staffing expenses. Revenue from the cost recovery fee (Call Answer Levy) totalled \$1,029,980 for the fiscal year. The cost recovery fee was increased from \$1.70 to \$3.00 per subscriber per month on January 1, 2025, to better align with actual program costs.

Now in its fifth year of service, NWT 9-1-1 remains committed to providing safe, timely, and effective emergency call handling, guided by internationally recognized, evidence-based protocols. In close collaboration with local emergency service providers and under the oversight of a contracted Medical Director, the program continues to deliver high-quality and fiscally responsible emergency communication services across the Northwest Territories (NWT).

Introduction

The *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* was passed by the Legislative Assembly in May 2019, and NWT 9-1-1 officially launched in November 2019. The 2024-2025 fiscal year represents the fifth full year of 9-1-1 service delivery in the NWT, providing essential support to residents and emergency responders across all 33 communities and in between.

This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* and its associated Regulations. It provides an overview of program performance and activity from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

The report includes the following:

Call data, such as:

- Total number of 9-1-1 calls received
- Calls made in the official languages of the NWT
- Monthly call volumes
- Community and regional call distribution

Financial data, including:

- Total revenue collected through the cost recovery fee (Call Answer Levy)
- A breakdown of operational expenditures

Service performance information, including:

- Key metrics
- Major developments
- Ongoing initiatives related to quality assurance, training, and system modernization

NWT 9-1-1 Service

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

Now in its fifth full year of operation, NWT 9-1-1 continues to evolve in line with public safety needs and GNWT priorities. The service is guided by the following goals:

- Deliver timely, evidence-based call handling, including pre-arrival, dispatch life support, and post-dispatch instructions to ensure caller safety and responder readiness.
- Coordinate emergency response by processing and dispatching calls to the appropriate agencies.

- Maintain reliable territory-wide infrastructure by engaging and collaborating with telecommunications service providers to support networks, equipment, and operational databases.
- Increase public awareness of 9-1-1 and promote its appropriate use through education and outreach.
- Ensure service delivery is accessible, fiscally responsible, and equitable across all regions and populations.

Key elements of the NWT 9-1-1 service

The delivery and continuous improvement of NWT 9-1-1 relies on several essential components:

- Legislation: The *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* establishes the framework for the service, including roles, participation requirements for telecommunications carriers and emergency responders, cost recovery fees, and reporting obligations.
- Emergency Communications Centre (ECC): The centralized ECC meets national critical infrastructure standards and serves as the operational hub for NWT 9-1-1.
- Technology: NWT 9-1-1 is actively working towards the modernization of a new Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and phone system. These upgrades would enhance call processing efficiency, improve response coordination, and ensure the system remains reliable and scalable for future needs.
- Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Weekly third-party quality assurance reviews cover 20% of all fire and medical calls, providing data to inform ongoing staff training and service enhancements.

Key services delivered by NWT 9-1-1

NWT 9-1-1 delivers a range of emergency communication services, including:

- Emergency call handling for police, fire, and medical services when health, safety, property, or life is at immediate risk.
- Pre-arrival and dispatch life support instructions for medical and fire emergencies (e.g., CPR, childbirth, choking, self-rescue).
- Call triage and coordination with community-based fire, rescue, and ambulance services.
- Supervised call transfers to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) with continued life support instruction, when applicable.
- Multilingual service delivery in English and French.
- Interpretation services for all 11 official NWT languages and over 200 additional languages via CanTalk.
- Teletypewriter (TTY) communication technologies for callers with hearing or speech impairments.

2024-2025 Operational Overview

NWT 9-1-1 Services

Dialing 9-1-1 in the NWT connects callers to the ECC in Yellowknife, which serves as the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the territory. The ECC operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is staffed by bilingual, certified medical and fire emergency dispatchers.

When a call is received, dispatchers ask callers to specify the required service – police, fire, or ambulance – the location of the emergency, and the phone number from which they are calling.

- Police service requests are transferred to the RCMP when needed.
- Fire or rescue calls from the Town of Hay River and the Town of Inuvik are transferred to secondary PSAPs located in Alberta for processing and dispatch, based on existing agreements with those municipalities.
- Fire or rescue calls in the Yellowknife area are transferred to the City of Yellowknife's Public Safety Communications Centre for processing and dispatch.

All other fire and medical calls within the NWT are handled directly by NWT 9-1-1 dispatchers, who notify local first responders, provide pre-arrival care instructions and dispatch life support until first responders arrive.

Bilingual and Interpretation Services

NWT 9-1-1 offers bilingual service in both English and French to ensure effective communication across the territory. Additionally, through the CanTalk interpretation service, NWT 9-1-1 can connect with callers in any of the NWT's official Indigenous languages, as well as more than 200 other languages.

Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, NWT 9-1-1 processed four calls in French and no calls in the NWT's official Indigenous languages. Interpretation services were also utilized for a limited number of calls in non-official languages, including Ukrainian and Russian.

NWT 9-1-1 remains committed to accessible and culturally respectful emergency communication. Although no calls in Indigenous languages were recorded this fiscal year, the service continues to monitor demand and maintain capacity to support all official languages and diverse communication needs across the territory.

NWT 9-1-1 Call Volumes

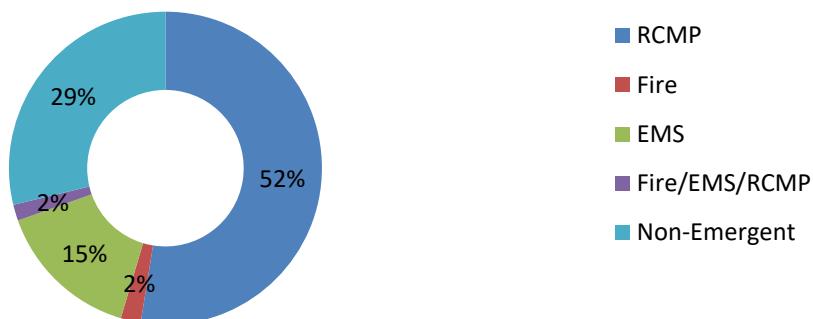
For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, NWT 9-1-1 received a total of 16,916 calls, of which 12,039 were classified as emergencies. 29% (4,857) were non-emergency, including hang-ups.

Additionally, there were 20 calls supporting the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM). NWT 9-1-1 staff answered these calls via their 24/7 duty phone line to collect pertinent information and pass it on to the appropriate personnel.

The “non-emergency” classification includes general information requests, miscellaneous inquiries, and caller hang-ups. Except for suspicious caller hang-ups, NWT 9-1-1 typically does not dispatch emergency response to these calls but may provide some level of service, support, or a callback.

Call Types

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025

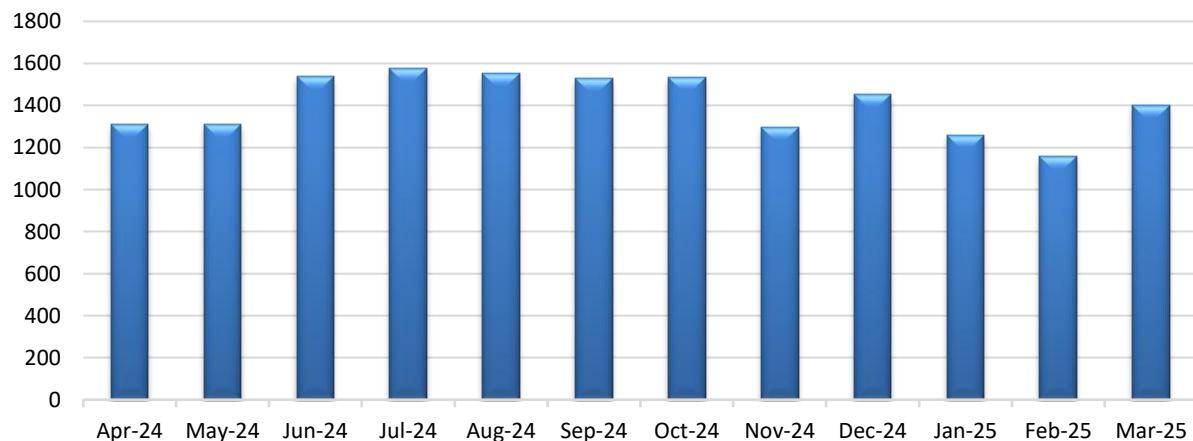


2024–2025 Fiscal Year	
Emergency Medical Services	2527
RCMP	8870
Fire / Rescue Services	361
Fire / Medical / RCMP Combination	281
Non-Emergency	4857
Support for EMO and OFM	20
Total Inbound Calls	16,916

Call Volumes by Month

The chart below illustrates the total number of emergency 9-1-1 calls received per month in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

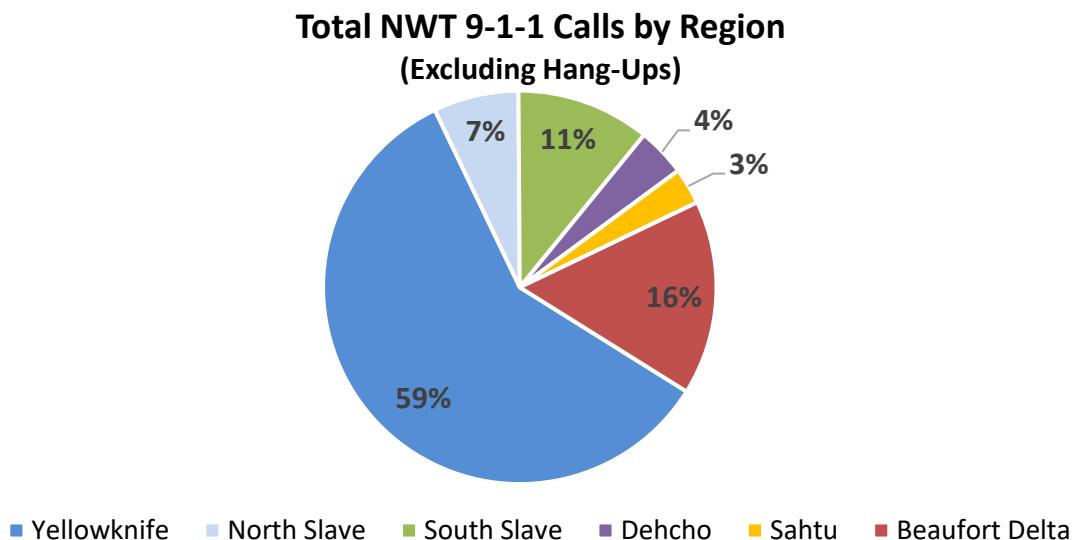
Total NWT 9-1-1 Calls (Excluding Hang-Ups)



Call Volumes by Region

The chart below provides a regional breakdown of all emergency 9-1-1 calls received during the 2024–2025 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 2024–2025 originated from Yellowknife.

Notably, the distribution of call volumes by region remains largely consistent with that of the previous fiscal year.



Historical Trends

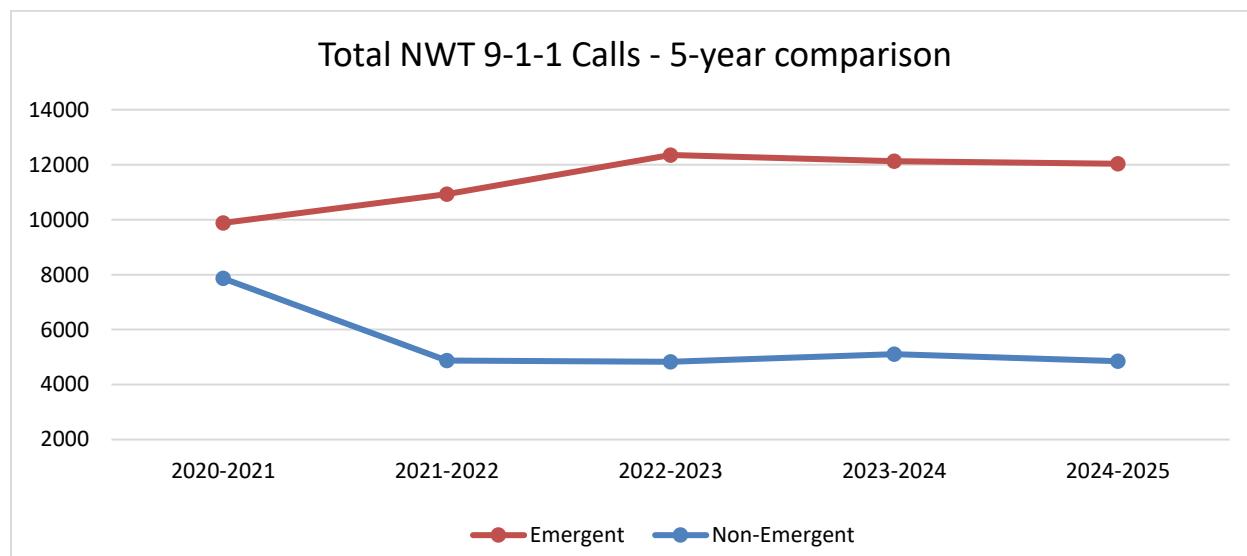
Over the past five fiscal years (2020–2021 to 2024–2025), NWT 9-1-1 has experienced a steady increase in emergency calls, while non-emergency call volumes have declined and subsequently stabilized.

- Emergency calls rose from 9,882 in 2020–2021 to 12,039 in 2024–2025, representing a 22% increase.
- Non-emergency calls dropped sharply from 7,863 in 2020–2021 to 4,878 in 2021–2022, then remained steady between approximately 4,800 and 5,100 calls annually.

These trends likely reflect a growing public understanding of appropriate 9-1-1 usage and the effectiveness of ongoing educational efforts. The initial decline in non-emergency calls may have resulted from early uncertainty regarding the scope and effectiveness of the new service, as well as broader confusion during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sustained moderate volume in recent years suggests a more mature awareness of when and how to appropriately access 9-1-1 services.

From November 2019 through March 2025, NWT 9-1-1 handled just under 58,000 emergency calls. The proportion of calls by type – including policing, medical, fire, and others – has remained relatively consistent year over year.

As NWT 9-1-1 enters its sixth year of operation, these trends demonstrate a strong and growing alignment between public use of the service and its intended purpose: providing timely, life-saving emergency response that meets national standards and reflects evolving public expectations.



Non-Emergency and Unregistered 9-1-1 Calls

While the majority of calls to NWT 9-1-1 are for legitimate emergencies, a significant portion are classified as non-emergency. These include accidental calls, calls from unregistered phones, and general inquiries that do not require an emergency response. Although not always urgent, each call is treated seriously and requires time and attention from dispatchers. MACA will be developing a future and ongoing campaign to increase public awareness of the 911 system.

Calls from Unregistered Phones

In Canada, any wireless phone can dial 9-1-1, even without an active service plan or SIM card. This ensures that emergency assistance is always accessible, regardless of a device's service status. In the NWT, this capability supports equitable access to emergency services across all communities.

However, calls from unregistered phones present operational challenges. These devices do not transmit caller ID or location information, and dispatchers cannot return the call if it is disconnected.

NWT 9-1-1 regularly receives calls from unregistered devices. Many are accidental, others are deliberate prank calls, which are difficult to address due to the lack of identifying information. While most do not result in emergency action, they require dispatcher attention and may impact response capacity during peak periods.

Accidental and Hang-Up Calls

Accidental calls, often caused by “pocket dials,” are another common source of non-emergency call volume. When a caller hangs up without speaking, dispatchers are required to attempt a call-back. If the situation cannot be confirmed as safe, the call is escalated. Any available information, such as GPS coordinates, is forwarded to the RCMP for follow-up.

This process ensures that every call is properly assessed. While it does add to the dispatcher workload, it is a critical safeguard to confirm public safety. Callers who stay on the line to confirm that no emergency exists help reduce unnecessary escalations and support the efficient operation of emergency services.

General Inquiries and Miscellaneous Calls

NWT 9-1-1 also receives calls for general information or support. These often involve requests for services such as towing, street outreach, or environmental reporting. While not urgent, these inquiries reflect the public’s trust in 9-1-1 as a point of contact in times of uncertainty.

Dispatchers aim to assist by providing basic information or referring callers to the appropriate agency. Callers are also encouraged to save relevant contact information for future reference. This educational approach helps reduce non-emergency call volume and ensures that 9-1-1 lines remain available for true emergencies.

NWT 9-1-1 Operational Costs

Financial Performance

The table below provides a summary of the financial performance of NWT 9-1-1 in 2024-2025, including the budget (Main Estimates), 2024-25 actuals, and 2023-24 actuals for comparison.

9-1-1 Program Budget	2024-2025 Main Estimates	2024-2025 Actuals	2023-2024 Actuals
Expenditure Category			
Compensation and Benefits	1,293,000	1,429,777	1,380,970
Other Expenses	234,000	400,446	178,694
Equipment Amortization	12,400	12,400	12,400
Total	1,539,400	1,830,224	1,572,064
Revenue Category			
Call Answer Levy*	1,650,000	1,029,980	948,308

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

Expenditure and revenue categories for the 2024–2025 fiscal year are summarized as follows:

- **Compensation and Benefits:** Core staffing for NWT 9-1-1 includes one manager, one system specialist, and six full-time dispatchers. While five dispatchers remains the minimum required to ensure 24/7 coverage, the addition of a sixth dispatcher has improved operational flexibility. This extra capacity supports vacation and leave coverage, facilitates onboarding and training of new staff, and helps ensure uninterrupted service during staffing transitions.
- **Other Expenses:** NWT 9-1-1 relies on integrated hardware and software systems to support emergency dispatch and pre-arrival care. These include computer-aided dispatch, standardized fire and medical protocols, digital call recording, and interoperability tools. The program also contracts with a third-party quality assurance provider to review approximately 20 percent of all fire and medical calls weekly.
- **Call Answer Levy:** A monthly cost recovery fee of \$1.70 per subscriber was established under the *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* and remained fixed for the first three years of operation. On January 1, 2025, the fee was increased to \$3.00 per subscriber per month to better align with actual program costs. Total revenue from this fee in 2024–2025 was \$1,029,980. The financial impact of the revised fee structure will be more accurately reflected in the 2025–2026 Annual Report.

NWT 9-1-1 Service Highlights

Five Years of Service

In November 2024, NWT 9-1-1 marked its fifth anniversary. This milestone offered an opportunity to reflect on achievements, growth, and lessons learned since the program's launch. Over five years, NWT 9-1-1 has continued to evolve, supporting timely and effective emergency response across the NWT.

The program has strengthened relationships with service partners, particularly with the City of Yellowknife. Together, we improved processes such as the direct transfer of fire-related calls for local dispatch. The City of Yellowknife also supported public awareness by promoting 9-1-1 as the primary emergency number online and through signage in public spaces using materials provided by NWT 9-1-1.

NWT 9-1-1 continues to review operations and collaborate with frontline agencies to strengthen emergency response. We are committed to working with communities to improve processes and access to services, in alignment with national and international best practices

Next Generation 9-1-1 and Technology Upgrades

The NWT currently operates a Basic 9-1-1 telecommunication system hosted on legacy infrastructure. While residents in every community can call 9-1-1, callers are required to verbally provide their location, callback number, and details about the incident. Although Emergency Location Services such as RapidSOS automatically identify GPS coordinates for some cellular phones, NWT 9-1-1 still relies heavily on caller-provided location information. This can be challenging when callers are unable to accurately describe their whereabouts.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) is a federally supported initiative aimed at modernizing emergency communications by improving location accuracy and enabling new forms of interaction, including text, photos, and video. Transitioning to NG9-1-1 requires significant upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure, which are the responsibility of carriers regulated by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

To prepare for NG9-1-1, NWT 9-1-1 has initiated a major capital project to procure and implement a new Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and integrated phone system that will be fully NG9-1-1 compliant. This upgrade would enhance data capture, improve accuracy in call location, enable more detailed reporting, and strengthen quality assurance processes. The new technology would increase the efficiency, reliability, and effectiveness of emergency communications across the territory.

The project began in 2024 and if approved, would be scheduled for completion by 2027. This project reflects NWT 9-1-1's ongoing commitment to providing resilient, responsive service that adapts to evolving technology and community needs. Additionally, NWT 9-1-1 continues to explore options such as B9-1-1+, which would allow registered users to text 9-1-1, a potential future enhancement with no established timeline.

Conclusion

NWT 9-1-1 continues to serve as a vital component of the emergency response system in the NWT. Collaborating and working closely with the RCMP and local first responder agencies, the program remains committed to quality assurance, ongoing improvement, and adherence to recognized best practices, ensuring that residents receive timely and reliable emergency support.

Looking ahead, NWT 9-1-1 will maintain its focus on evolving to meet the needs of residents, visitors and emergency service providers.

Feedback from stakeholders, emergency partners, and the public is valued and welcome as we strive to enhance and adapt the service continuously.

Contact Information

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