

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24-49

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish the CNMI Next/Gen 911 Telephone Communications System within the CNMI; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE 24TH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Title.** This Act shall be known and may be cited as the “CNMI
2 Next/Gen 911 Communications Systems Act of 2025.”

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that there is no
4 single governmental agency designated with the authority to establish, administer,
5 and maintain the existing emergency “911” telephone communication system that
6 is presently stationed at the Department of Public Safety. It is the intent of the
7 Legislature to transfer all programs, positions, personnel, property, and
8 appropriations which are currently under the direction of DPS or any other
9 government agency to the Department of Fire & EMS.

10 The Legislature finds that the emergency “911” system has not been
11 effectively and efficiently operational due to lack of personnel, funding, supplies
12 and equipment, and above all, coordinated efforts. The Legislature finds that twelve

1 full-time 911 Dispatchers, a Section Officer in Charge under the DFEMS division
2 of Emergency Services, funding for operations, equipment, personnel, training are
3 critically needed in order to establish a fully functional and national compliant
4 Emergency “911” communication system. Such a system will provide the residents
5 and visitors of the CNMI with rapid and direct access to emergency agencies with
6 the intent of reducing the response time to situations requiring police, fire, medical
7 and other emergency services.

8 The Legislature finds that there is a critical need for unified direction and
9 administration to resolve the current fragmented, referral type service, for training
10 of the Emergency 911 call takers. and a need for funding to include training,
11 additional personnel, and compliant emergency 911 communications equipment.

12 **Section 3. Amendment.** Title 1, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 18, Article 4 of
13 the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended by adding a new section 28034 to read
14 as follows:

15 **“ § 28034. CNMI 911 Communications Systems.**

16 **101. Definitions.**

17 (1) *Call Routing* shall mean the reception of emergency calls where the
18 purpose of it is to only determine the course of direction of routing (police, fire, and
19 medical) resulting in rapid transfer of medical emergency callers to the Department
20 of Fire & EMS.

1 (2) *Compliance to Protocol* shall mean the adherence to the written text or
2 scripts and other dispatch protocol reference system.

3 (3) *Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Program* shall mean a program
4 administered by the Department of Fire and EMS for the purpose of insuring safe,
5 efficient, and effective performance of dispatchers in regard to their use of the
6 dispatch protocol reference system.

7 (4) *Dispatch Lite Support (DLS)* shall mean the knowledge, procedures, and
8 skills used by trained Emergency Dispatchers in providing care and advice through
9 pre-arrival instructions and post-dispatch instructions to callers requesting
10 emergency medical assistance.

11 (5) *Emergency Dispatcher* shall mean a person trained and certified to
12 provide emergency dispatch services in accordance with guidelines approved by
13 the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services and is employed by the
14 Department of Fire and EMS.

15 (6) *Emergency Dispatching* shall mean the reception, evaluation,
16 processing, and provision of dispatch, management of requests for emergency
17 assistance, and participation on ongoing evaluation and improvement of the
18 emergency dispatch process. This process includes identifying the nature of the
19 request and prioritizing the severity of the request.

20 (7) *911 Call Center* shall mean a section of the CNMI Department of Fire
21 & EMS under the Division of Emergency Services that is tasked to administer,

1 maintain and operate all 911 emergency calls for police, fire and medical dispatch
2 services within the Commonwealth.

3 (8) *Emergency Dispatch Services* shall mean the process for taking requests
4 for emergency assistance from the public, identifying the nature of the request,
5 prioritizing the severity of the request based on policies and procedures, dispatching
6 the necessary resources, providing medical aid and safety instructions to the callers,
7 and coordinating the responding resources as needed.

8 (9) *Next/Gen-911* shall mean the telephone, wireless, Voice Over IP
9 (VOIP), satellite and radio communications system specifically designated for
10 handling the police, fire, medical and public safety communications needs of the
11 CNMI. The system must automatically identify the caller's telephone number,
12 location with capabilities to receive and transmit SMS, Video Message and Access
13 for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities.

14 (10) *Quality Assurance and Improvement Program* shall mean a program
15 approved by the Department of Fire and EMS for the purpose of insuring safe,
16 efficient, and effective performance of emergency dispatchers.

17 (11) *Vehicle Response Configuration* shall mean the specific vehicle(s) of
18 varied types, capabilities, and numbers responding to render assistance.

19 (12) *Vehicle Response Mode* shall mean the use of emergency driving
20 techniques, such as warning lights-and-siren or routine driving response as assigned
21 by the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

1 **102. Certification.**

2 (1) No person may represent himself/herself as a dispatcher unless certified
3 in the CNMI by the Department of Fire and EMS.

4 (2) No business, organization, or government agency may represent itself
5 as an emergency dispatch agency unless the business, organization, or government
6 agency is certified by the Department of Fire and EMS.

7 **103. National Standards Required.**

8 The Department of Fire and EMS shall use applicable national standards
9 when developing the rules and regulations for emergency dispatchers and
10 emergency dispatch agencies.

11 **104. Authority and Responsibilities.**

12 Pursuant to this Act, the Department of Fire and EMS through its
13 Commissioner shall have the authority and responsibility to establish rules and
14 regulations, set standards, fees and collect fees for the following:

15 (1) All Emergency Dispatch Protocols, Reporting, Standards, All
16 Emergency Dispatcher Training, Curriculum, Certification and Re-Certification.

17 (2) Land Based Mobile Dispatching:

18 (a) Land Based Mobile Radio System (Smart-Net);

19 (b) Rota, Tinian and Saipan in Interconnectivity. Towers/Repeaters
20 on each island; and

1 (c) Interoperability means upgrading Rota and Tinian to SmartNet
2 and away from VHF.

3 (3) Access for individuals with hearing and speech disabilities will be
4 implemented in current and all future upgrades:

5 (a) The CNMI Department of Fire & EMS's Emergency 911
6 Telephone Communications System shall be accessible to individuals with
7 hearing and speech disabilities.

8 (b) The means for such accessibility shall primarily be mobile and
9 landline telephones, but nothing herein shall be construed as to limit the
10 CNMI Department of Fire & EMS from providing access to the Emergency
11 911 Telephone Communications System through other modes of
12 communication.

13 (4) Violations and Penalties.

14 (a) Any person guilty of willfully violating or failing to comply with
15 any provisions of this Act or regulations set forth by the Department of Fire
16 and EMS shall be fined not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250), or
17 imprisoned not more than three months, or both, per incident.

18 (b) Any agency or organization guilty of willfully violating or
19 failing to comply with any provision of this Act or regulations set forth by
20 the Department of Fire and EMS shall be fined not more than one thousand

1 dollars (\$1,000) or imprisoned not more than six months or be both fined
2 and imprisoned per incident.

3 **105. Authorization to Establish 911 Surcharge.**

4 (1) The Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission (“PUC”) shall
5 establish and amend, as required, a monthly surcharge to be known as the “911
6 Surcharge” to be paid by Local Exchange Telephone, Broadband/Internet Providers
7 and Commercial Mobile Radio Service subscribers.

8 (2) If the PUC is not formalized then the rates listed in Section 105 shall be
9 in effect within 90 days upon enactment of this legislation.

10 (3) The “911 Surcharge” shall be established at a rate not less than the listed
11 amount per month.

12 **Monthly 911 Designated Fee**

13 Individual landline	\$1.50
14 Individual Extension	\$.50
15 Individual Wireless	\$1.50
16 Individual Data in Wireless	\$1.00
17 Individual Broadband/Internet subscription	\$1.00
18 Radio/telephone	\$1.00
19 Individual Prepaid Wireless	\$.50
20 Prepaid Reload Card	3% value of reload card

1 (4) The purpose of the “911 Surcharge” is to fund the just and reasonable
2 expenses of operating and maintaining the enhanced “911” emergency system.

3 **106. Collection of “911 Surcharge”.**

4 (1) Each Local Exchange Carrier (LEC), Voice Over Internet Protocol
5 (VOIP) provider, Internet/broadband and Commercial Mobile Radio Service
6 (CMRS) provider shall collect the surcharge as established by the Commission, and
7 identify such as a separate line item on its invoice.

8 (2) Each LEC, VOIP, Internet/Broadband or CMRS provider shall remit the
9 amounts collected to the Department of Finance designated “911 Surcharge”
10 account no later than forty-five (45) days of each monthly billing.

11 (3) Each LEC, VOIP, Internet/Broadband or CMRS provider shall charge
12 for “administrative fees” to cover actual expenses incurred for collection services,
13 maintaining the PSAP database, and for reports and audits as may be required by
14 the Commission. These “administrative fees” shall NOT be charged to the monthly
15 “911 Surcharge”. The “administrative fees” shall be a separate charge and
16 designated separately as “administrative fee for 911” and identify such as a separate
17 line item on each customer billing. Each LEC, VOIP, Internet/Broadband or CMRS
18 provider must ensure that the “administrative fees” are consistent with a
19 Commission-approved budget for such expenses.

1 (4) The surcharges collected pursuant to this Act are not subject to any tax,
2 fee or assessment, nor are they considered revenue of the LEC, VOIP,
3 Internet/Broadband or CMRS provider.

4 (5) For purposes of this Act, a CMRS provider means a provider of wireless
5 cellular, telephone service, or wireless personal communications service.

6 (6) Subscriber lines are the lines that Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers
7 (I-LEC) use to connect to, and that Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (C-LEC)
8 and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) carriers use to interconnect to, the local
9 (CNMI) telephone exchange.

10 (7) For purposes of this Act, a VOIP provider means a provider of telephone
11 service over the internet, and within the 670 area code.

12 **107. Creation of CNMI 911 Emergency Special Fund.**

13 There is hereby created, separate and apart from all other funds of the
14 government, the CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center Fund. The Secretary of Finance
15 shall create this fund account within 60 days of the enactment into law.

16 All the 911 surcharges collected by each LEC, VOIP, Internet/Broadband
17 or CMRS provider shall be deposited in the CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center
18 Fund. The money collected and the interest earned shall be used by the Department
19 of Fire and Emergency Medical Services solely for CNMI 911 Emergency Call
20 Center. The Commissioner of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical

1 Services is the expenditure authority of the CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center
2 Fund.

3 The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Service shall only use the
4 funds for the following:

5 (1) Costs associated in the procurement of land, design,
6 construction and maintenance of the CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center.

7 (2) Purchase or lease of Next/Gen 911 or latest hardware, software
8 and radio dispatching equipment for CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center
9 System.

10 (3) Costs associated in the installation, maintenance and upgrade of
11 the Next/Gen 911 System.

12 (4) Associated monthly recurring costs related to the Next/Gen 911
13 system, operations and connectivity.

14 (5) All costs associated in hiring and staffing of the CNMI 911
15 Emergency Call Center System facility and operations.

16 (6) All training costs associated to the CNMI 911 Emergency Call
17 Center System.

18 (7) All costs for consulting services associated with promulgating
19 regulations, creating policy and procedures in the operations and
20 enhancement of the CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center.

1 (8) All costs related to membership in the National Emergency
2 Number Association (NENA), National Association of State 911
3 Administrators (NASNA), Association of Public Safety Communication
4 Officials (APCO), and other 911 related associations, National Emergency
5 Management Administrators (NEMA), the International Association of
6 Chief of Police (IACP), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC),
7 National Sheriffs Association (NSA) and sub-divisions of these national
8 association.

9 (9) All costs associated in attending national meetings, conferences
10 and expos to further enhance the CNMI 911 Emergency Call Center.

11 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the CNMI 911 Emergency
12 Call Center Fund shall be available to the Department of Fire and Emergency
13 Medical Services without further appropriation. No monies in the CNMI 911
14 Emergency Call Center Fund shall be expended for purposes other than provided
15 for in this Section, without the expressed approval of the legislature.

16 **108. Exemptions from Surcharge.**

17 Recipients of life-line rates for local exchange telephone service, and
18 telecommunication services that are incapable of “911” access, including, but not
19 limited to, interstate and international interconnections, are exempted from the “911
20 Surcharge”.

21 **109. Uncollectible Surcharges.**

1 Each LEC, VOIP, Internet/Broadband or CMRS provider collecting the
2 surcharges shall be responsible for collection of surcharges.

3 **110. Establishment/Authorization of Positions.**

4 There is hereby authorized the creation of thirteen (15) new positions within
5 the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) Emergency
6 Medical Dispatch Division, as follows:

7 (1) Twelve (12) Emergency Medical Dispatchers, to be classified under the
8 following ranks:

9 (a) Emergency Medical Dispatcher I;

10 (b) Emergency Medical Dispatcher II; and

11 (c) Emergency Medical Dispatcher III.

12 (2) One (1) Dispatch Office in Charge, who shall oversee the operations of
13 the Emergency Medical Division.

14 (3) One (1) IT Systems Administrator.

15 (4) One (1) IT Support Specialist.

16 (5) Duties and Responsibilities.

17 (a) Emergency Medical Dispatcher I (EMD-I): Entry-level position
18 responsible for answering emergency calls, dispatching emergency units,
19 and providing pre-arrival instructions to callers under supervision.

1 (b) Emergency Medical Dispatcher II (EMD-II): Intermediate-level
2 dispatcher responsible for performing advanced call-taking and dispatch
3 duties, mentoring EMD-I personnel, and assisting with quality assurance.

4 (c) Emergency Medical Dispatcher III (EMD-III): Senior-level
5 dispatcher with supervisory responsibilities over EMD-I and EMD-II
6 personnel, overseeing complex dispatch operations, and assisting in training
7 and evaluation.

8 (d) Dispatch Officer in Charge (DOIC): Division head responsible
9 for the management, administration, scheduling, and operational oversight
10 of the Emergency Medical Dispatch Division.

11 (e) IT Systems Administrator: Responsible for overseeing the
12 maintenance, security, and performance of all IT systems used in the 911
13 Call Center, including dispatch software, servers, network infrastructure,
14 and communications technology.

15 (f) IT Support Specialist: Responsible for providing day-to-day
16 technical support to 911 operations staff, ensuring software and hardware
17 functionality, assisting with troubleshooting, and supporting cybersecurity
18 protocols.

19 (4) Compensation.

1 The starting salary and schedule shall be determined by the Commissioner
2 of Fire and the Office of Personnel Management in accordance with the
3 Government Classification and Pay Plan and shall be equal as such:

- 4 (a) Firefighter I- Emergency Medical Dispatcher I
- 5 (b) Firefighter II- Emergency Medical Dispatcher II
- 6 (c) Firefighter III- Emergency Medical Dispatcher III
- 7 (d) Fire Captain- Dispatch Section Officer in charge

8 (5) Regulations.

9 (a) The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, in
10 consultation with the Office of Personnel Management, shall promulgate
11 rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this section, including
12 but not limited to qualifications, training requirements, and promotion
13 criteria for the ranks established herein.

14 (b) The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services shall
15 establish minimum qualifications and job descriptions for the IT Systems
16 Administrator and IT Support Specialist positions in accordance with civil
17 service rules and applicable CNMI hiring standards.”

18 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
19 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
20 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its


1 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid
2 shall not be affected thereby.

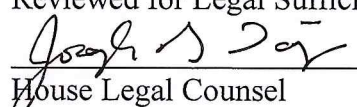
3 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein
4 shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or
5 acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted
6 under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding
7 instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have
8 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,
9 which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

10 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by
11 the Governor, or its becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 8/11/2025

Date: _____

Introduced by: 
Rep. Malcom J. Omar

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

House Legal Counsel

Date: 8-11-25