

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. 03 02-98-0009
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 28 September 1998

TO/DEST. 9-1-1 Management Board

FROM/EXP. Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Management Board

SUBJECT/OBJET **9-1-1 SERVICE INTERRUPTION**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.

BACKGROUND

The attached memorandum dated 28 Aug 98 from the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service is attached for the consideration of the Board.

The 9-1-1 Advisory Committee considered this matter on 25 Sep 98 and the extract of the draft Minute is appended for your reference.

*Approved by
Rosemary Nelson*

app.



Ottawa-Carleton
Regional Police Service

Service de police régional
d'Ottawa-Carleton

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 28th, 98
TO: D/C Vince Bevan
FROM: Gary Nelson
Staff Sergeant, Communications Centre
SUBJECT: 9-1-1 SERVICE INTERRUPTION

Received	AUG 28 1998
FILE #	02-88-06
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Issue:

On Saturday August 22nd 1998, at approximately 2100 hrs, a Mr Gerry Clifton from Ashton, Ontario (Goulbourn Township) called 9-1-1 as his garage had caught fire. The 9-1-1 call was not routed to our centre in Ottawa-Carleton, it was routed to a Bell Canada operator, who routed the call to the wrong Fire Department.

Our 9-1-1 Bureau received a 9-1-1 call from a neighbour of Mr Clifton at 2103 hrs requesting the Fire Department for Mr Clifton. We immediately routed this call to the Goulburn Fire Department, who responded to the fire at Mr Clifton's residence. However, at this time, Goulburn Fire Department had received a call from Mr Clifton.

Investigation:

The matter was investigated and it was discovered that there was a "routing problem" for several residences in that area. Checking of area switches with Bell Canada indicated that the calls from Mr Clifton, when he dialed 9-1-1, were sent to a Bell Operator.

Bell Canada advised they rectified the routing problem at 1400 hrs on Tuesday, August 25th for all area residents who were affected. The changes were tested by having Mr Clifton call 9-1-1 and at that time Mr Clifton's call came to our 9-1-1 centre with the proper ANI/ALI (automatic number indicator/automatic location indicator) information.

Conclusion:

I have notified Mr Gordon Kept, the Chair of 9-1-1 Management Board, of this situation and suggested that Bell Canada perform testing in other areas of the Region to verify 9-1-1 capabilities. This will be discussed at the next 9-1-1 Management Board meeting in October.

I have also forwarded a copy to Supt Patrick Moyle, who is a member of the 9-1-1 Management Board.

Dial 911 for nightmare

Area man's garage destroyed in fire as calls for help routed, re-routed

By **DONNA CASEY**
Ottawa Sun

AN ASHTON man says the 911 rescue system failed him last week and may be leaving other people in the lurch.

Gerry Clifton watched his garage go up in flames last Saturday as he made three frantic calls to 911.

But instead of receiving emergency help, all he got was a recording saying all available operators were busy.

After the fire, Clifton learned his emergency calls were not going to the region's 911 call centre, but were being accidentally routed to a Bell operator in Toronto — 350 km away.

The Bell operator had no idea where Ashton was. The town lies halfway between Carleton Place and Munster.

"You're not supposed to have to explain where you are in case you pass out or something. They should know where you are," Clifton, 62, said.

When a fire started in the detached garage beside his home on 26 Carlisle Circle near Ashton, Clifton ran into his house, grabbed his cordless phone and headed outside to call 911.

That was only the start of a communications nightmare.

After having no luck getting through to a 911 operator, Clifton then dialled zero but his phone line

went dead.

He ran across the street to the house of his neighbor, who managed to get through to who she believed was a 911 operator.

However, Clifton's neighbor soon grew frustrated when she had to give the operator specific directions to the fire scene.

The 911 call had switched to a back-up 911 system with a Bell operator in Toronto taking the emergency call.

Using the Lanark-area exchange to identify the caller's location, the Bell operator then transferred Clifton's neighbor to the Carleton Place fire department — the wrong fire station.

The dispatcher at the Carleton Place fire station referred the now-exasperated caller to the Goulbourn fire department, which turned out

to be a long-distance call from her home.

Clifton's neighbor then called the Goulbourn fire station just before 9 p.m.

Within 15 minutes, Goulbourn firefighters were on the scene but not soon enough to save Clifton's garage.

Damages were estimated at \$80,000.

An overlap between Clifton's Lanark Co. telephone exchange and his home's location within the Ottawa-Carleton area led to the communication snafu, said a Bell Canada official.

"It would appear there were a few residences where the calls to 911 were not correctly routed through to the 911 operator," said Bell Canada spokesman Don Hogarth.

All 911 calls made outside of a 911-

call area get patched through to an operator as a "fail-safe" backup, but Clifton said Bell's safety net has some big holes.

"About a year and a half ago, on Christmas night, I had some chest pains through the night and had some great difficulty explaining (to the Bell operator) where we were located," said Clifton.

When a caller dials 911, the address, phone number and location of the residence immediately appears on the operator's screen.

Last Tuesday, Bell Canada technicians doubled-checked the routing of 911 calls from homes near Clifton's house and changed the 911 routing from Clifton's home, "and a few others," to go directly to the region's 911 call centre at regional police headquarters on Elgin St., said Hogarth.

Extract of Draft Minute
9-1-1 Advisory Committee
25 September 1998

4. 9-1-1 SERVICE INTERRUPTION
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 11 Sep 98

The Committee Chair stated that a number of residents in Goulbourn were not connected to 9-1-1 and requested an overview by the 9-1-1 Manager, Bell.

L. Jenkins advised that the mandate of the Region prior to the introduction of 9-1-1 service in 1988 required all residents of Ottawa-Carleton to have access to 9-1-1. To comply with this request, Bell introduced a method to route 9-1-1 calls from residents that lived within the Region (in boundary areas) but had telephone service from central offices located outside the Region e.g. Goulbourn - some residents are served from the Carleton Place central office. These telephone subscribers required a code to be added to their customer profile that would allow a 9-1-1 call to be routed to the 9-1-1 Bureau in Ottawa, but callers outside of the Region e.g. Beckwith Township (Lanark County) would route to "0" (zero) and a Bell operator. In the event a code was incorrect, the Regional residents would also route to "0" as a back-up procedure and the operator would transfer the call to police, fire or ambulance as was the case for Mr. Clifton as outlined in the report dated 11 September 1998.

She went on to state that in tests following this incident, it was discovered that several residents were routed to "0" and the routing codes are on every line and they have been corrected and the entire system was examined to ensure there were no glitches. With the migration to PERS, this line application will disappear because the new technology will provide the civic address on the screen of the call-taker and any downstreamed agency. She indicated she would be meeting with the Fire Chief and residents of the township to explain this issue to residents.

The Committee Chair advised that when this issue was discussed by the Regional Fire Chiefs at a recent meeting, it was discovered that this was not the first time this situation has occurred and he questioned whether there was a way of checking the extent of the boundaries with a view to determining if there are other groups that might be affected. L. Jenkins advised that this has already done and while the system is better off now than before, she could not guarantee it would not happen again. She explained that in the situation in Goulbourn, the caller did not know which municipality they were in and when the 9-1-1 call was routed to a Bell operator who asked which fire department the caller wanted, listing those that appeared on the screen, the caller chose the wrong one. She emphasized that people must know which municipality they live in, so the operator can properly refer the call to the appropriate agency.