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National Emergency  
Number Association



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## **Wireless E9-1-1 Call Limitations Illustrated in Florida Tragedy**

*9-1-1 Association believes lack of location technology contributed to woman's drowning*

COLUMBUS, Ohio (February 27, 2001)—The story of Karla Gutierrez's drowning quickly gained National coverage after she dialed 9-1-1 on her wireless phone from her sinking car in a Miami, Florida canal. Not able to escape the car and with dispatchers unable to locate the scene of Gutierrez's accident, the woman perished before emergency help could reach her.

Since the incident, a number of factors have been discussed relating to Gutierrez's death. While, by nature, emergencies such as this contain many variables and are unpredictable, NENA believes the Gutierrez situation may have been handled differently had the 9-1-1 dispatcher received her cellular phone callback number and location information.

"NENA understands that in each emergency response, many factors affect the ultimate success of the responding agency," said Norman Forshee, President, National Emergency Number Association (NENA). "Clearly in this case, there was little time to reach Ms. Gutierrez, but the lack of her location was clearly a factor that frustrated the efforts of the dispatcher in the Miami tragedy."

"Location information should be an automatic component of every 9-1-1 call, for both wireline and wireless calls such as the one placed by Gutierrez," Forshee added. "This tragedy should serve as a reminder to all parties concerned that location information is a valuable tool in saving lives."

"Ms. Gutierrez's tragedy occurred in a crucial period where wireless carriers and public safety entities are supposed to be deploying wireless location technology under existing FCC rules," said W. Mark Adams, NENA Executive Director. "NENA continues to urge industry and public safety to move as quickly as possible towards deployment of this life-saving technology."

According to rulings by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the deadline for a wireless 9-1-1 caller's phone number—also called wireless 9-1-1 Phase I—to be received by 9-1-1 communicators has passed. Wireless caller location information, or Phase II, is to be received in 9-1-1 centers as of October 1, 2001. NENA estimates that less than 20% of the Nation's population is served by Phase I, and a virtually all of the Nation remains without automatic location Phase II service.

With only seven months until the October 1, 2000 FCC target date, NENA urges action on this issue by all of the stakeholders involved.

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NENA is the only organization dedicated solely to the promotion and implementation of 9-1-1 as America's universal emergency number. NENA's mission is to foster the development and implementation of 9-1-1 as a universal emergency number. NENA has more than 7,000 members, most

of whom manage the 4,300 primary 9-1-1 centers that answer and process 9-1-1 calls. As a part of its mission, NENA also develops recommended standards and protocol for 9-1-1 services. NENA's international headquarters is located in Columbus, Ohio.