

A woman in a light-colored blouse is seated at a desk in a call center, wearing a headset and looking at a computer monitor. The background shows other call center agents and office equipment. A yellow frame highlights the text on the left.

Emergency Communications Service Delivery Model in British Columbia

Advice to the Province of BC

September 2025



Shape the future
with confidence

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Disclaimer: This report was prepared for the Government of British Columbia and is advisory in nature. While we have outlined a recommended approach in line with our understanding of Provincial priorities, any decision on the path forward remains with the Province and should be tailored to policy objectives.

Executive summary

As part of the broader Independent Review of E-Comm commissioned by the Province of BC, this report builds on the findings identified to support defining a path forward to more clearly define the Provincial role in the governance, funding, and coordination of Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) services. The goal is to enhance public safety outcomes and create a more cohesive, unified vision for emergency management and emergency communications.

The independent review of E-Comm highlighted several key challenges that are magnified by the lack of a well-defined, comprehensive and cohesive service delivery model for emergency communications. The predominance of a single primary PSAP service provider, E-Comm, a disbursed secondary PSAP service environment and a complex stakeholder environment, coupled with the absence of standardized service targets and a clearly defined role for the Province, results in inefficiencies that hinder potential cost savings and financial sustainability. Moreover, this poses significant risks to the resilience of the system, particularly in the event of a major disaster that would rely on a well-coordinated system and could overwhelm existing resources.

When evaluating the service delivery model for emergency communications in BC, three primary components were considered: governance, provincial standards and regulations, and funding.

Governance: Although several provincial statutes grant legal authority for different aspects of emergency communications, they do not create a unified framework for PSAP service delivery. These statutes include the Emergency Communications Corporations Act (ECC Act), Police Act, BC Emergency Health Services Act, and Municipal Police Unit Agreements (MPUAs).

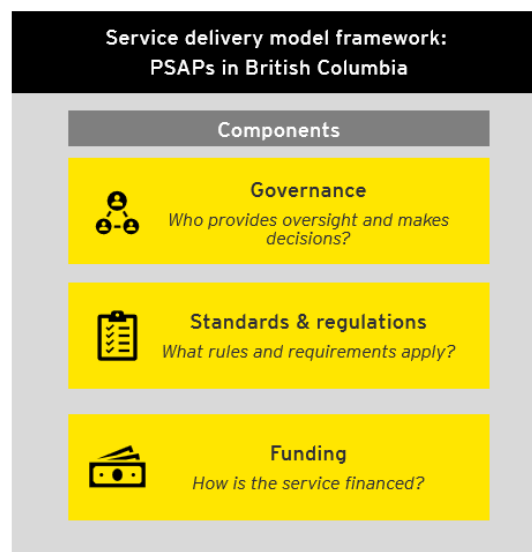
Standards and regulations: There is currently no province-wide regulatory framework guiding PSAP service delivery in BC, and the governing legislation does not exist to enable this activity. Instead, standards and practices are determined independently by local governments, regional districts, and third-party service providers that operate PSAPs.

Funding: Local governments are responsible for funding emergency communications services and have noted in recent years that the unpredictability of increasing costs of PSAP services have made it challenging to fund as they manage their municipal operating budgets. As E-Comm delivers most of the primary PSAP services in the province (responsible for 99% of province-wide 911 calls), a significant driver of financial sustainability for primary PSAP services is the stability and predictability of E-Comm's costs.

Provincial guiding objectives

Working with directly with Ministry staff, four key objectives were identified to evaluate future model options. This allowed the analysis to demonstrate alignment of each model option with intended policy outcomes for the emergency communications sector in the Province. They include:

1. **System capacity:** the ability to effectively deliver during emergencies, ensuring appropriate continuity and resilience across the province.
2. **Financial sustainability:** the predictability, stability and cost certainty of funding over time.



3. **Provincial consistency:** equal access to 911 emergency communications services and uniform service levels across BC.
4. **Futureproofing:** to keep pace with advancements in technology and evolving public expectations.

Future model options

Four future service delivery model options for primary PSAP services in BC were defined and evaluated against the Province’s objectives to identify the best path forward for the emergency communications sector.

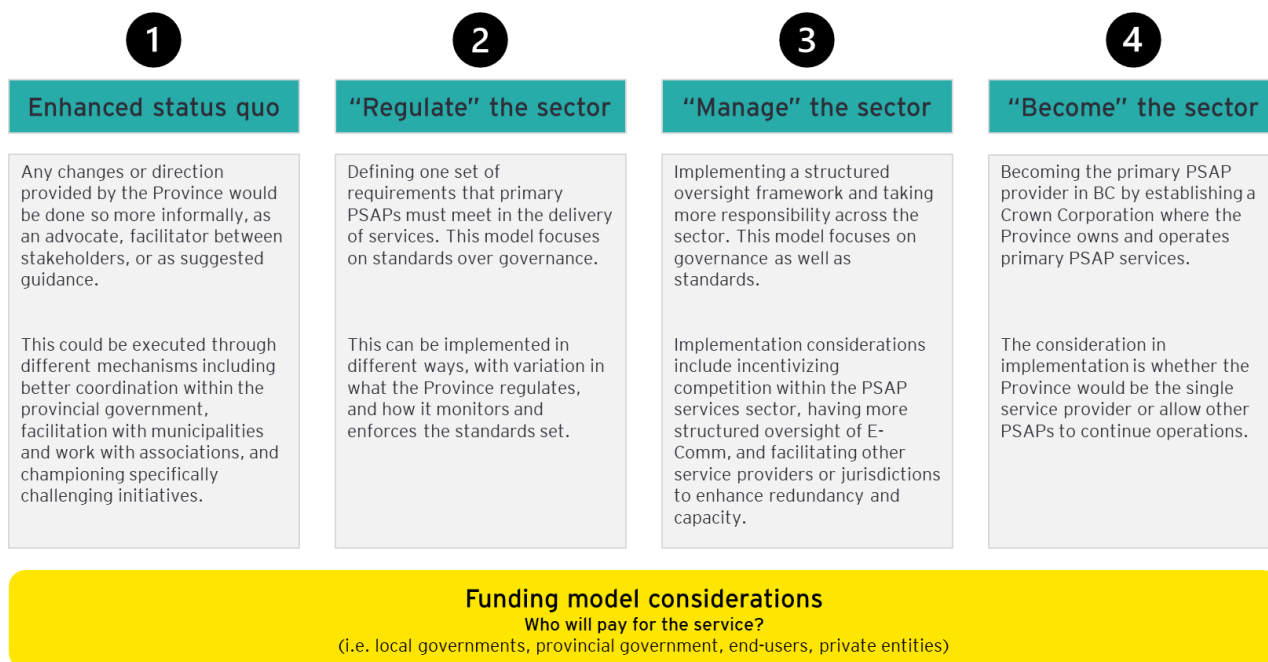


Figure 2: Future service delivery model options

Funding model considerations

The primary decision impacting funding of emergency communications is who should pay for the service: municipalities and regional districts (current state), the provincial government, the public users of the service through service levies, or private companies (such as telecommunications organizations).

- **Local governments** currently pay for these services, sourced through property taxes or landline levies (publicly funded), and cover both operating and capital costs. As the role of the province changes, municipalities should expect to see greater efficiency and transparency in the funding they provide.
- **Provincial** funding could include grants for capital projects or capacity building related to meeting standards or could include operating base funding.
- **End-user** funding is commonly used in other jurisdiction as a source of funding, and includes landline, cellphone, and/or internet service levies.
- **Private company service delivery model and funding** could be considered as an alternative to traditional public or end-user funding models, potentially enhancing resource availability, like Australia, the UK, or New Zealand. These jurisdictions use telecommunications providers to provide primary PSAP services. Services are generally funded through telecommunication service levies.

Any of the funding options explored can be implemented with any of the selected service delivery model options so the decision can be made separately.

Analysis of alignment with provincial objectives

The recommended future state is **Option 3 - “Manage” the sector** as it aligns closest with the Province’s objectives. In this model there is shared responsibility between all levels of government, increasing oversight and accountability, improving financial stability, and reinforcing the resilience of the sector through collaboration and integration between service providers.

	1 Enhanced status quo	2 “Regulate” the sector	3 “Manage” the sector	4 “Become” the sector
System capacity	×	~	✓	~
Financial sustainability	~	~	✓	~
Provincial consistency	×	~	✓	✓
Futureproofing	~	~	✓	×

Recommended option

Legend
 ✓ Meets
 ~ Partially meets
 × Does not meet

Figure 3: Summary of analysis of model options

Considerations for implementation

Considerations for implementation encompass a range of factors, including stakeholder engagement, the establishment of a clear legislative framework which provides appropriate authorities for enforcement, and sustainable funding mechanisms to support the capacity building required to meet defined standards. By prioritizing these considerations, the Province can foster a more coordinated and responsive emergency communications sector that meets the evolving needs of its communities and is well integrated within the broader emergency services ecosystem.

Conclusion

There is a criticality associated with defining the future of the Provincial role within the emergency communications sector to address current state challenges, optimize operations within the sector, and ultimately protect public safety. Moving to a model where the Province actively manages the sector, with a role defined in legislation, will mitigate the risks currently observed with a complex stakeholder environment without a unified, clear governance framework.

Introduction

Emergency communication services are essential for maintaining public safety and ensuring effective emergency response in British Columbia (BC) and they exist within a complex stakeholder environment with several key players who are all reliant on each other.

The graphic depicted below shows emergency communications service providers, including primary and secondary PSAP services, dispatch, emergency response coordination, and foundational telecommunications infrastructure and radio network services. The full ecosystem includes key parties in the emergency management ecosystem more broadly that the emergency communications sector interacts with. The focus of this report is on emergency communications services, and more specifically, the role of the Government of the Province of British Columbia (the “Province”) within this sector.

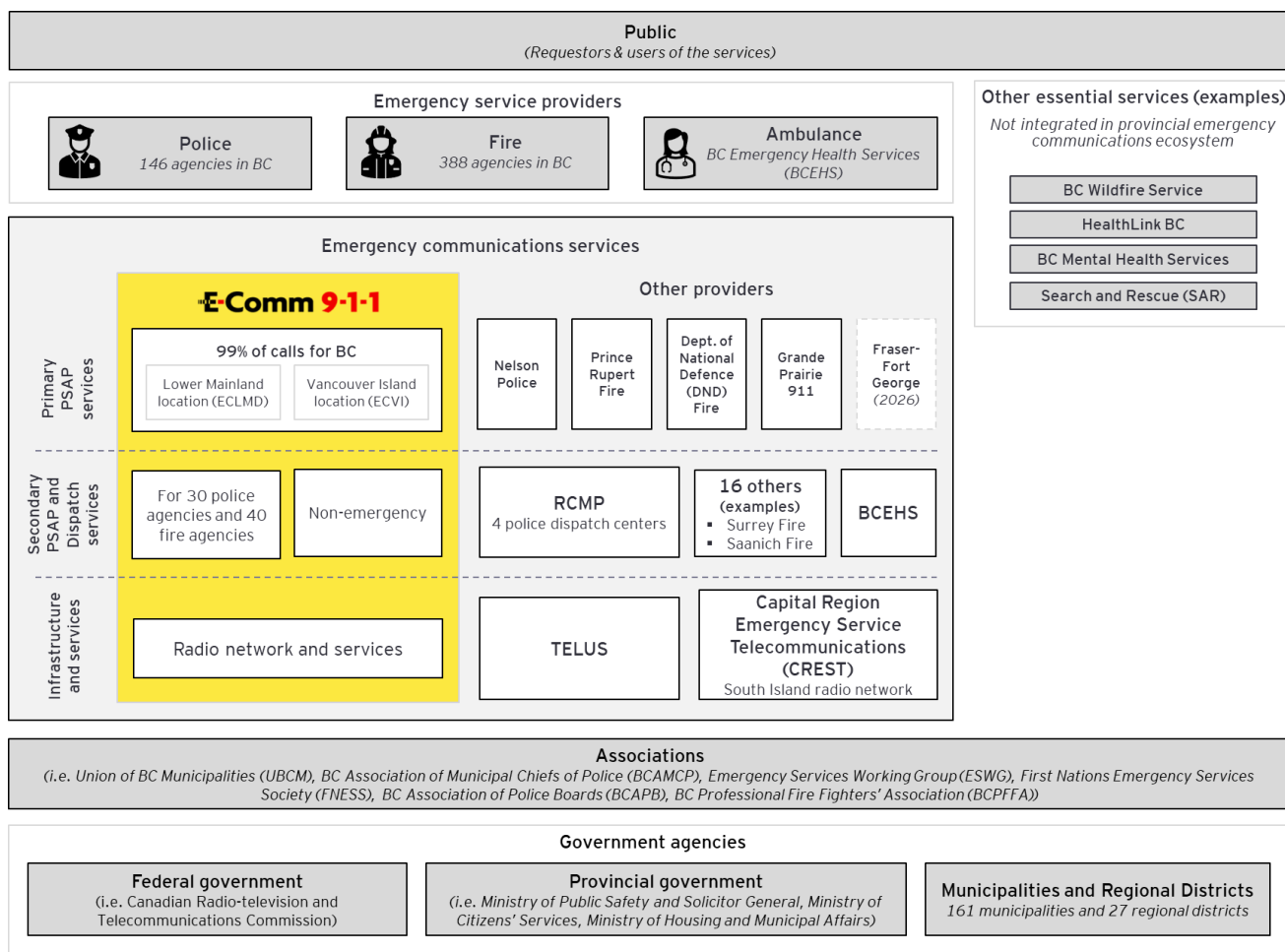


Figure 4: Emergency services ecosystem^{1,2,3} (Source: EY created graphic based on observations throughout the review)

The public are noted within the overarching ecosystem as they are the requestors and users of emergency services. Emergency service providers, including the police, fire and ambulance agencies across the province

¹ The total number of police agencies includes 12 municipal police departments, 1 First Nations police service, and 133 BC RCMP detachments. (Sources: BC Government website, RCMP website).

² The number of fire departments is based on the BC Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) Fire Department Listing document (dated 07/12/2024). (Source: BC Government website).

³ The number of secondary PSAPs is derived from the BC 9-1-1 Landscape Document prepared by Chris Kellett & Associates Ltd. in March 2024, as well as information from the RCMP website.

are responsible for providing core services and are direct users of emergency communications services to connect them with the public when emergency service is requested. In future, requestors of services could include automated calls by devices.

Associations have formed within the sector for a variety of reasons but largely serve as advocacy bodies for groups of actors within the ecosystem.

Municipalities and Regional Districts are buyers of emergency communications services, while *Provincial government* agencies are responsible for oversight (with varying degrees of legislative authority). The *Federal government* is largely involved via the CRTC responsible for the telecommunications network; the CRTC has mandated the adoption of Next Generation 911 (NG911) across the country.

TELUS is responsible for the connectivity of underlying emergency communication infrastructure that supports all service providers and the flow of data. TELUS is officially BC's emergency communications service provider as deemed by the federal regulator.

Emergency communications services, above the communications infrastructure, are defined by three categories: primary PSAP services, secondary PSAP and dispatch services. It is important to recognize that primary PSAP, secondary PSAP, and dispatch services are three distinct functions.

- Primary PSAPs (typically referred to as call answering) are responsible for answering the initial 911 call and determining which agency is needed.
- Secondary PSAPs (typically referred to as call taking) receive the transferred call and gather additional information for that agency.
- Dispatch services involve assigning and directing emergency responders to the scene, and do not typically communicate directly with the public.

While Secondary PSAP providers often also perform dispatch services, the two are not synonymous.

Primary PSAP services in BC

Currently, there are five primary PSAPs in BC:

- E-Comm, a not-for-profit corporation, is the largest primary PSAP in the province handling approximately 99% of 911 call-answer services. It has two locations: one in the Lower Mainland, and one in the South Island.
- Nelson Police,
- Prince Rupert Fire,
- Department of National Defence Fire (Esquimalt) and
- Grande Prairie 911 (an Alberta-based provider) that supports the Northern Rockies Municipality in the northeast of BC.

**The Fraser-Fort George District has announced plans to become a primary PSAP starting in 2026.*

Secondary PSAP and dispatch services in BC

In contrast to the primary PSAP environment, secondary PSAP and dispatch service delivery is more fragmented, with 16 secondary PSAPs (including E-Comm):

- E-Comm provides outsourced dispatch services to 30 police agencies in the Lower Mainland District and South Vancouver Island and 40 fire agencies in the Lower Mainland District, Northern Okanagan and South Vancouver Island.
- RCMP operates four Operational Communications Centres (OCCs), located in Courtenay, Kelowna, Prince George, and Surrey⁴ to manage police dispatch services.
- Some fire departments maintain their own dispatch systems, while others rely on contractual agreements with neighbouring fire departments that have the necessary infrastructure. Notable service providers include:
 - Surrey Fire provides dispatch services to multiple fire departments on both the mainland and island, covering over 25% of the BC population.
 - Saanich Fire extends its services to other fire departments within the Capital Regional District.
- BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) operates three sites in Langford, Vancouver and Kamloops to centrally coordinate ambulance dispatch services.

Scope and approach

As part of the broader Independent Review of E-Comm commissioned by the Province, this report builds on the findings identified to support the Province in defining a path forward to more clearly define its future role in the governance, funding, and coordination of PSAP services. This will enhance public safety outcomes and create a more cohesive, unified vision for emergency management and emergency communications in the province.

The complete scope was delivered through two separate reports, the first (“Independent Review of E-Comm”) focuses specifically on E-Comm as an organization, including:

- Governance: Assessing the effectiveness of E-Comm’s strategic management and board governance.
- Finance: Evaluating the financial processes, health, and sustainability of the organization.
- Operations: Analyzing operational efficiency, effectiveness, and resilience.

The second report (this report) addresses the broader emergency communications ecosystem, and specifically the role of the Province in this ecosystem. This report aims to:

- Assess the future state of 911 service delivery, identifying future state options and regulatory framework changes required to support the future role of the Province in this ecosystem.

This report focuses on the service delivery model for primary PSAPs and the call-answer services of secondary PSAPs in the Province of BC. This report does not address a provincial model for dispatch, radio network and radio services, infrastructure, flow of data through the system, or emergency services (police, fire, ambulance). However, it acknowledges the overall complexity of the system and coordination required between these components and aims to support the Province in aligning its policy outcomes and objectives with a future state service delivery model for PSAPs in BC.

The approach for this advisory report included several working sessions with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) where provincial objectives and model option frameworks were co-designed.

⁴ [RCMP website](#) lists four RCMP 911 Police Dispatch Centre locations in British Columbia: North District - Prince George, Island District - Courtenay, BC RCMP Headquarters - Surrey, and Southeast District - Kelowna.

Current state

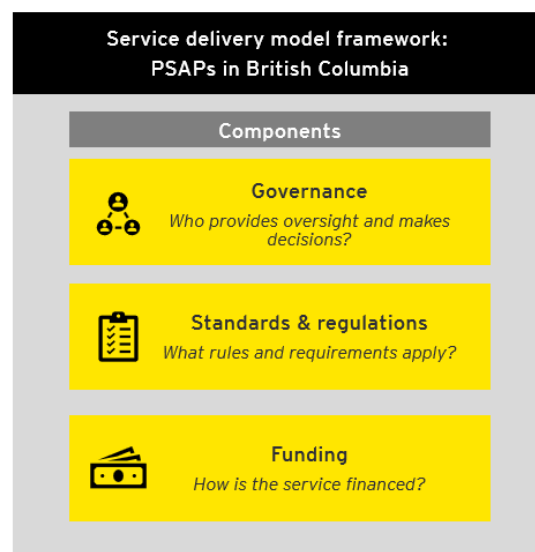
The independent review of E-Comm highlighted several key challenges that are magnified by the lack of a well-defined, comprehensive and cohesive service delivery model for emergency communications in the Province. The predominance of a single primary PSAP service provider, E-Comm, a disbursed secondary PSAP service environment and a complex stakeholder environment, coupled with the absence of standardized service targets and a clearly defined role for the province, results in inefficiencies that hinder potential cost savings and financial sustainability. Moreover, this poses significant risks to the resilience of the system, particularly in the event of a major disaster that would rely on a well-coordinated system and could overwhelm existing resources.

The lack of coordination among services further complicates the landscape, as the Province's role in overseeing and integrating these services remains unclear. Consequently, this absence of collaboration not only diminishes the overall effectiveness of emergency responses but also restricts the ability to meet the diverse needs of the communities served. Addressing these challenges is essential to enhancing the effectiveness of the emergency communications ecosystem in British Columbia.

Service delivery model

When evaluating the service delivery model for emergency communications in BC, three primary components were considered:

- **Governance** - how responsibilities and decision-making authority for PSAP services are structured and exercised, including the roles of the Province, local governments, regional districts, and service providers.
- **Standards and regulations** - the frameworks, performance expectations, and oversight mechanisms that guide the delivery of PSAP services and hold providers accountable.
- **Funding**- how PSAP services are financed, including sources of funding, allocation methods, and sustainability (control around cost growth and reliability of long-term funding sources).



Together, these components shape the delivery of PSAP services and influence the capacity of PSAPs to deliver timely, reliable, sustainable, and coordinated emergency communications services. A current state assessment of the PSAP service delivery model in BC is outlined below.

Governance

Governance examines how decision-making authority, oversight responsibilities, and accountability for PSAP services are structured. This considers who is responsible for setting strategic direction, ensuring compliance with standards, monitoring performance, and making key operational and financial decisions. A key factor in this instance is the enabling legislation to provide the ability to maintain visibility over service delivery, align local operations with broader system priorities, and respond effectively to needs or risks in the province. Strong governance structures can instil confidence by promoting transparency, coordination, a

clear understanding of roles, and consistent quality, while weaker or more fragmented arrangements may lead to variability in service, absence of accountability, and reduced oversight.

Although several provincial statutes grant legal authority for different aspects of emergency communication, they do not create a unified framework for PSAP service delivery.

- ***Emergency Communications Corporation Act (ECC Act)*** – Establishes emergency communications corporations in BC. It sets out their purposes, the process for incorporation, membership requirements, governance structures, and reporting obligations. E-Comm, which operates as the largest PSAP in BC, was created under this Act. This Act provides no mechanism for Provincial oversight of PSAP services.
- ***Police Act*** – Governs policing in BC, including the establishment and administration of municipal police departments, the framework for provincial policing by the RCMP under contract, and the delivery of related support services. Under the *Police Act*, the Province is responsible for providing policing and law enforcement services in rural areas or municipalities with populations of up to 5,000. For municipalities with populations exceeding 5,000, this responsibility (and the responsibility to fund) is delegated to local governments which may establish a municipal force or contract for policing services with the RCMP.
- ***Emergency Health Services Act*** – Establishes the authority for the provision of emergency health services in BC. It designates BCEHS as responsible for operating ambulance services and associated dispatch functions for medical emergencies.
- ***Municipal Police Unit Agreements (MPUAs)*** – Establishes the contractual framework between the Province and municipalities that opt to use the RCMP for municipal policing. While the agreements do not set out obligations for emergency communications, it does recognize telecommunication operators as part of police support staff and include telecommunication and other communication systems within the definition of equipment for which municipalities are responsible for. Some interpret telecommunications to mean 911 service delivery, but this is not explicit.

Each of these statutes and agreements applies to a distinct emergency service and governs only the functions within its scope. While the Province holds overarching accountability for public safety, it does not have a formally defined legislated role or responsibility in the governance, oversight, or operations of PSAP services. Oversight by the provincial government is limited to the specific functions covered under each statute or agreement, and there is no overarching mechanism to coordinate or standardize governance, operational practices, or performance requirements across emergency communications services.

Governance is a challenge in the current model as the absence of a well-defined provincial role hinders coordination and collaboration across the emergency communications ecosystem, and the fragmented legislative mechanisms limits unity or a standardized approach, and the ability to influence within the complex stakeholder environment.

Standards and regulations

Standards and regulations examine the formal requirements, guidelines, and enforcement mechanisms that define how PSAP services are delivered and monitored. This component considers the extent to which there are clear, enforceable expectations for service quality, operational procedures, technical interoperability, and staff training and certification. It also considers whether there are systems in place to monitor compliance and address deficiencies. The strength and clarity of standards and regulations directly influence service consistency, reliability, accountability and cost to deliver across jurisdictions.

Given there is currently no province-wide regulatory framework guiding PSAP service delivery in BC (and the governing legislation does not exist to enable this activity), standards and practices are determined independently by local governments, regional districts, and third-party service providers that operate

PSAPs. For example, in the current model, Delta Police operate on the standard that 'no call is too small' and expects E-Comm to answer and triage calls based on that principle. However, the City of Vancouver Police have a requirement to triage calls towards non-emergency lines where possible to effectively manage available police resources.

This decentralized approach results in variation in policies, procedures, and service expectations across jurisdictions. Furthermore, there is no formal provincial mechanism to monitor PSAP performance, assess compliance, or require corrective action if deficiencies are identified. The absence of a unified standards and oversight framework limits the ability to ensure consistent service quality, operational reliability, resilience, and accountability across the provincial emergency communications system (and thus any impacts emergency communications services have on public safety outcomes).

Funding

Funding examines how operations and improvement efforts are funded and whether the model supports sustainable, equitable, and scalable financing. It directly impacts the financial sustainability, equity and modernization capacity of the future model, influencing both municipal and provincial fiscal exposure. A well-designed funding framework can help reduce disparities across jurisdictions, enable strategic upgrades, and clarify fiscal responsibility.

Funding for PSAPs is diverse. E-Comm, as a not-for-profit entity, operates on a cost-recovery basis primarily relying on service fees paid by municipalities for both its primary and secondary PSAP services. Under section 3.2 of the *Police Act*, municipalities with populations over 5,000 are responsible for providing policing, which includes emergency communications services. They do this through property taxes or municipal landline levies.

As municipalities are responsible for funding emergency communications services, there may be disparities in service quality and availability, particularly in rural and remote areas where resources may be limited. Municipalities and local governments have noted in recent years that the increasing costs of PSAP services have made it challenging to fund, with most local governments regularly re-evaluating service delivery options. Municipalities that elect not to have 911 services (primary PSAP services), would still have 10-digit numbers that route directly to emergency service providers (secondary PSAP services).

As E-Comm delivers most of the primary PSAP services in the province (responsible for 99% of province-wide 911 calls), a significant driver of financial sustainability for primary PSAP services is the stability and predictability of E-Comm's costs and thus the levies passed on to clients. As identified in the E-Comm Independent Review Report, there have been significant challenges with E-Comm's rising levies, expense and budget management. The absence of a provincial role and the predominance of E-Comm as the primary PSAP service provider leaves E-Comm's clients with little recourse.

Finally, the federal government (through the CRTC) has mandated the transition to NG911, which necessitates significant capital investment and carries the potential of increased operating costs. While the Province has provided funding to support E-Comm and local governments in this transition, there has been no federal allocation of financial resources specifically for this purpose. Not only are the ongoing operational cost impacts of this transition unknown, but the absence of a cohesive funding strategy can hinder investment in technology and training, ultimately impacting the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of emergency service delivery. Capital funding requirements are going to increase in the future as the pace of technological change increases. There is currently no framework to provide financial support as a part of the model.

External pressures

The emergency communications landscape is evolving and becoming increasingly complex in response to system pressures. Key areas contributing to this complexity which must be considered include:

- Rising call volumes (the province call volume extrapolated from E-Comm's reported call volume, increasing from about 1.87 million calls in 2020 to about 2.07 million calls in 2024) and call complexity, including more calls requiring multi-agency coordination (e.g., mental health calls).
- Increasing climate related events (e.g. heat domes, atmospheric rivers) and a lack of coordinated redundancy, resiliency, and business continuity planning needed for large scale emergency response.
- Inconsistent service and capacity across regions, particularly some areas of BC do not have access to 911 PSAP services.
- Increasing public expectations for resilient, reliable and affordable service delivery, as evidenced by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) calling for the Province to review the 911 delivery model to support reliable, affordable and sustainable services for all communities.
- Expected changes in BC's policing model.
- New technical and operational challenges stemming from the federally mandated transition to NG911, a modernized emergency communications system that allows the public to contact 911 using voice, text, and multimedia over a secure, digital IP-based network. This federal mandate primarily applies to Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs), leaving PSAPs to manage their own migration efforts. It is unknown what impacts NG911 will have on PSAP operations as well as whether municipalities and regional districts can fully support future data requirements.
- A shift in call sources from landlines to cell phones, and in future potential shifts to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and satellite calls. Furthermore, research by Frost & Sullivan⁵ indicates that by the end of 2028, emergency calls initiated by sensors and Internet of Things (IoT) devices could outnumber those initiated by humans.
- An unclear understanding among local government and provincial government decision makers as well as the public regarding the structure, strengths and weaknesses of BC's current emergency communications system.

⁵ Frost & Sullivan's Next Generation 911 (2024 Edition) report predicts that sensor-initiated 911 calls will exceed human-initiated calls by year-end 2028, driven by a rise in IoT-initiated calls from connected systems like security devices, vehicles, and smart infrastructure.

Provincial guiding objectives

This report explores how changes to the primary and secondary PSAP services can enable or constrain provincial priorities within the emergency communications sector. Identification of future state objectives was completed in collaboration with the Province, answering key questions arising from challenges in the current state:

- How does the current PSAP service delivery model meet or fall short of the evolving needs of emergency services organizations, local governments, and the public?
- What role should the Province play in accountability, oversight, funding, and coordination of PSAP service delivery?
- What level of risk tolerance is appropriate in future state for PSAP services among provincial and local government decision makers?
- How can the Province support all British Columbians in receiving reliable and resilient emergency communication services while managing operational, financial, and legal risks?
- How can the system adapt to the rapidly changing technology environment and requirements?

These questions helped to frame four key objectives to shape the future service delivery model analysis. In the future state, the Province aims to achieve:

- 1. System capacity** **System capacity refers to the ability of the emergency communication services sector to effectively deliver during emergencies, ensuring appropriate continuity and resilience across the province.**

Business continuity, redundancy, and resilience are currently assessed and supported within individual PSAPs, however appropriate system capacity would require this to exist on a more macro, system-wide level with enhanced collaboration and integration between the service providers. This is ultimately in pursuit of supported public safety outcomes, and a unified approach to emergencies.
- 2. Financial sustainability** **Financial sustainability within the sector encompasses the predictability, stability, and cost certainty of funding for emergency communication services over time.**

This criterion is important because it ensures that local governments can maintain and improve their PSAP services without the risk of sudden financial shortfalls. A sustainable financial model allows for long-term planning and investment in technology and personnel, which are essential for effective emergency response; predictability in these costs is critical to local governments as for many, public safety (including E-Comm) is among their largest expenditure items, and materially impacts property tax levies annually. By establishing transparency in funding mechanisms and cost stability, the Province can ensure the delivery of consistent and reliable services to local governments.
- 3. Provincial consistency** **Provincial consistency means both equal access to 911 emergency communications services and uniform service levels across British Columbia.**

This supports managing risks to public safety, disparities in service delivery across rural areas and First Nations communities, and the challenges within

the sector with efficiently consolidating emergency communications service levels due to the range of different standards and requirements. Consistency enhances public trust in emergency services, creates better efficiency in the delivery of services, and improves overall outcomes during emergencies. A consideration for this principle is the ability to enforce standards.

4. Futureproofing

Futureproofing for rapidly changing technologies involves the proactive adaptation of emergency communication systems to keep pace with advancements in technology and evolving public expectations.

This is especially critical with the implementation of NG911 and the new functionality it unlocks. It is essential that emergency communication infrastructure and processes remain relevant and effective in the face of emerging tools and platforms. This could include investments in technology, but it emphasizes coordination within the ecosystem to support its ability to adopt new technologies and encouraging innovation within the sector.

Defining future model options

Four future service delivery model options for primary PSAP services in BC were defined and evaluated against the Province’s objectives to identify the best path forward for the emergency communications sector. These options were specifically defined with focus on defining and clarifying the Province’s role within sector. A summary of each model is outlined in Figure 6, followed by details below.

Service delivery model considerations consist of impacts to governance and standards and regulations as well as considerations to what other jurisdictions have implemented. These comparators show a range of approaches, from strong provincial oversight and ownership (e.g., Saskatchewan) to more locally driven models (e.g., Alberta, New Brunswick). They highlight that there is no single “best” model but rather a spectrum of governance, regulatory, and funding arrangements, each with impacts to policy and outcomes to consider.

Further, there are numerous ways that each model can be implemented, meaning it is important for the Province to undergo a detailed design phase once its target model has been selected to weigh the different options for implementation. Some of these considerations have been outlined within.

Funding model considerations have been outlined separately because, on analysis, they are agnostic of the service delivery model options (i.e., any funding model can be implemented regardless of the service delivery model selected, and they are not mutually exclusive).

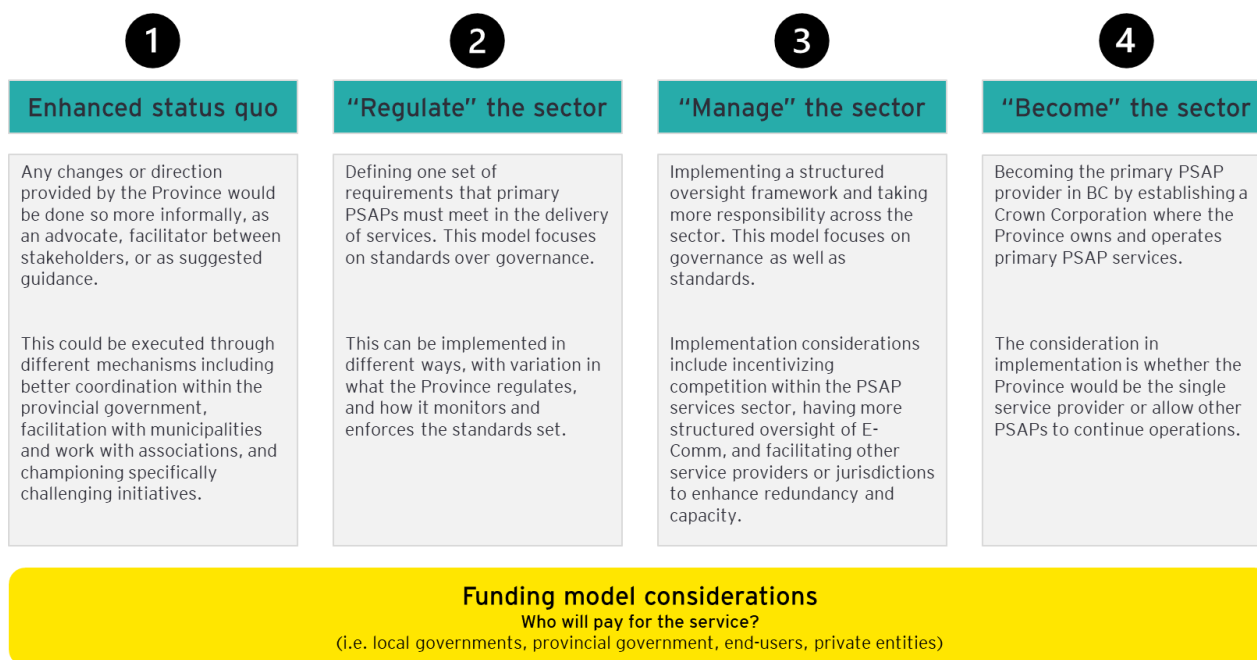


Figure 6: Future service delivery model options

Option 1: Enhanced status quo

The enhanced status quo model entails changes to the current state and how the Province informally works with PSAPs without any significant changes to legislation. Any changes or direction provided by the Province would be done so more informally, as an advocate, facilitator between stakeholders, or as suggested guidance. This could be executed through different mechanisms including better coordination within the provincial government, facilitation with municipalities and work with associations, and championing specifically challenging initiatives.

The Province of Ontario has a similar model as Option 1 where most PSAPs are governed by local governments (with some exceptions for those operated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)). There are no Provincial standards or regulations.

Governance

In an enhanced status quo model, governance remains the same as current state. This model operates without a legislative mechanism for oversight, resulting in limited provincial involvement and accountability. Many of the decisions about the emergency communications sector remain with local governments and primary PSAP service providers, such as E-Comm.

The ability for E-Comm, as the predominant primary PSAP service provider, to achieve economies of scale is limited and management of the stakeholder network remains complex.

Standards and regulations

To enhance the current state in this model, the Province could serve a role of facilitator, advocate, and integrator on major decisions and change within the sector, but it would not be able to mandate any change. A couple of examples and considerations have been outlined below.

- **Coordination within the provincial government** could involve the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) for consideration to public safety impacts, the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs for consideration to impacts on municipalities, and the Ministry of Citizens' Services (CITZ) for consideration to emergency communications infrastructure and connectivity.
- **Facilitation with municipalities and work with associations** could include a central coordination role to bring together the many voices at the tables on different types of standards and regulations, and the challenges and considerations when setting, agreeing to, and governing a provincially consistent standard. Potential topics for province wide standardization include emergency communication services provided, service procedures, service levels or metrics, business continuity and/or redundancy levels, training and certification requirements, etc.
- **Championing challenging initiatives** could include a role for the Province on a specifically challenging issue facing the emergency communications sector and working with all stakeholders to achieve a positive outcome. Some examples of these issues include province-wide access to emergency communications services, culturally sensitive emergency communications services (especially with consideration to First Nations communities), the transition to NG911 and impacts that will be felt across the ecosystem, and/or connectivity and redundancy between service providers (building a more resilient, more connected emergency communications ecosystem).

Option 2: "Regulate" the sector

Regulating the sector means providing one set of requirements that primary PSAPs must meet to improve consistency of service across the province and reduce the complexity of stakeholder management as the Province provides a point of integration. This can be implemented in different ways, with variation in what the Province regulates, and how it monitors and enforces the standards set.

Both Alberta and Quebec have implemented regulatory frameworks to govern primary PSAP operations. These frameworks vary in what they cover and how they are enforced demonstrating that there is a range of ways and focus areas that this option can have. In Alberta, the PSAP services are governed by the *Alberta 9-1-1 Standards*, which apply to both primary and secondary PSAPs. These standards outline operational and technical requirements for consistent and reliable emergency call services. In Quebec, services are governed by the *Regulation respecting standards, specifications and quality criteria applicable to 9-1-1 emergency*

centres and to certain secondary emergency communication centres. This regulation applies to all primary PSAPs and secondary PSAPs that are dispatch centres for fire or police services. Each PSAP in Quebec is required to obtain Certificate of Compliance issued by the Ministry of Public Safety, valid for up to five years, with regular audits conducted.

Governance

Legislative reform is required to enable enforcement of provincially set standards and regulations.

Regulating the sector could include non-binding service level agreements in the short term (building on model option 1) to begin building connectivity in the sector and a collaborative approach to standard setting while binding regulation authority is established in legislation.

Standards and regulations

There are several different areas for which standards and regulations could be set, with varying degrees of enforceability. If the Province were to choose this model, it would need to define the areas it wishes to regulate and how before proceeding in defining the regulations. Specific areas for consideration include:

- Defining a standard set of emergency communication services
- Defining minimum service standards or targets, certification and training requirements
- Minimum redundancy and resilience requirements, etc.

It should focus on standards and regulations for primary PSAP services in the province as there is the greatest opportunity for standardization and economies of scale with E-Comm as the predominant provider. Standardizing service procedures could in turn impact cost stability and predictability. While there may be cost considerations related to enforcement, setting minimum service level targets could both improve financial sustainability by ensuring standardization across geographies, while also aligning services to provincial public safety outcomes. Defining minimum requirements for business continuity and resilience could support sector-wide collaboration and improved public safety outcomes in the event of a catastrophic event.

Option 3: “Manage” the sector

Managing the emergency communications sector builds on the idea presented in Option 2 of more Provincial involvement in oversight and accountability. In this model, the Province would stretch its role beyond standards and regulations to implement a structured oversight framework and take more responsibility across the sector. Implementation considerations for this option include incentivizing competition within the PSAP services sector to support cost efficiency, having more structured oversight of E-Comm as the predominant primary PSAP service provider, and facilitating other service providers or jurisdictions to enhance redundancy and capacity.

New Brunswick has implemented service contracts with six primary PSAP centers run by municipalities to manage service delivery, including meeting performance metrics and adhering to standard operating procedures (SOPs), and to modernize 911 by linking all PSAPs into one single virtual center. This model expands further to a provincial dispatch system planned for future.

Governance

This option would require legislative reform to enable a broader role and enhance the mandate of the Province to deliver. As noted, there are different ways to manage the sector. Some considerations have been outlined below:

- **Incentivizing competition in the market** can be supported through cost management mechanisms as well as through facilitating and coordinating the buying power of municipalities across the Province and contracting PSAP services on their behalf (the Province could hold contracts with PSAP service providers, and facilitate municipal buyers, connecting them to the services).
- **More structured oversight over E-Comm** would allow the Province authority to contribute to strategic direction and priority setting, cost control discussions, etc. With this implementation objective, the Province would collaborate with Crown Agencies Secretariat to implement a structured oversight framework. The framework should consider provincial authorities such as the ability to appoint E-Comm's board without fully establishing a Crown Corporation (like the model utilized by Worksafe BC).
- **Facilitate capacity and redundancy with other PSAPs** (within and outside of BC) to support increased emergency communications resilience in the province as well as taking responsibility for access to PSAP capacity. For example, if the RCMP withdraws its primary and secondary PSAP services, the Province would have a mandated role to make sure capacity to provide these services continues to exist. Or, if rural and remote areas do not have access to primary PSAP services, the Province would be responsible for facilitating access, further enhancing equitable and consistent access across the province. In the current state, this accountability exists without the legislated responsibility to act.

Standards and regulations

In this model, there is greater ability to set, track, enforce and influence standards and regulations across the sector. All the considerations in option 2, would apply here for option 3 on standards and regulations, however stronger governance enables new outcomes.

Option 4: "Become" the sector

In the fourth option, the Province becomes the primary PSAP provider in BC by establishing a Crown Corporation where the Province owns and operates primary PSAP services. The consideration in implementation of this model is whether the Province would mandate all primary PSAP services be contracted with a single provincial provider, or if the Crown Corporation would be one option amongst other PSAP service providers in the province.

Saskatchewan has implemented a Crown Corporation ("Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency" [SPSA]) which operates one PSAP center, with a second one planned for 2026. It provides primary PSAP services as well as police and fire dispatch. SPSA also contracts with two municipally run PSAPs to provide 911 call answering services (secondary PSAP and dispatch services are governed at the local level). The three current primary PSAP service providers are all connected and provide backup to each other when busy. All primary PSAPs are required to follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and meet transfer time target.

Governance

This would require a significant legislative and funding model reform but would directly enable provincial consistency in services provided and the ability to impact outcomes to public safety. This could move forward in different ways. Current capacity to delivery primary PSAP services in the Province is held by E-Comm so the Province would need to explore how to harness that capacity.

The new organization would be monitored like other Crown Corporations with careful oversight by the Crown Agencies Secretariat.

This option weakens the autonomy of local governments in primary PSAP services but enables sector-wide efficiencies, innovation, access, and resilience. Some local governments already noted that their autonomy and input into services is reduced through E-Comm as a predominant provider without any market choice.

Standards and regulations

In this model, the Province would directly set, and deliver against any services, standards and regulations. The Province would have full control through complete responsibility to deliver and accountability for outcomes.

Funding model considerations

Funding model considerations are agnostic of the service delivery model options detailed above. Any of the funding options explored can be implemented with any of the selected service delivery model options so the decision can be made separately.

The primary decision impacting funding of emergency communications is who should pay for the service: the provincial government, municipalities and regional districts (current state), the public as requestors and users of the service, or private companies (such as telecommunications organizations). Considerations relating to each funding source and how it would impact the service delivery model are outlined below. These options are also not mutually exclusive and can be implemented in combination.

Municipal / regional district funding

This is the current state funding source for primary PSAP services. With E-Comm as the predominant primary PSAP service provider, they would be subject to E-Comm's costs as defined by the organization with limited recourse or competition in the sector to control levy fluctuations.

Most municipalities cover primary PSAP services through property taxes or landline levies (public funded).

In Ontario, funding responsibility rests largely with local governments (like BC). Alberta, Quebec and New Brunswick have implemented a shared cost model, where local governments contribute alongside end-user funding (cell phone levies) of varying amounts (outlined further below in end-user funding).

Provincial funding

Provincial funding provides the opportunity for incentives to achieve a set of standards or objectives outlined by the Province.

The degree of Provincial funding is also flexible as municipalities and regional districts are currently required to pay for these services. Some scaled options could include:

- Ad hoc grants for capital projects or transformation projects.
- Structured service-based grants or incentives for achieving service targets.
- Time-bound capacity building grants to provide primary PSAPs with support to build capacity required to meet standards and regulations set by the Province.
- Operating funding (provide funding for a set of services, i.e. primary PSAP services).

None of the jurisdictions evaluated have implemented this model without end-user funding to cover costs (more details below).

End-user funding

Introducing another end-user funding model includes consideration to introducing a cellphone (and/or VOIP) levy which is issued through monthly bills to every cell phone or internet service bill in the province. This can be collected by telecommunication providers and provided to the Province to disburse to either municipalities to support with payments, or directly to primary PSAP service providers to reduce costs and levies.

End-user levies have been implemented in several provinces across Canada at slightly different rates, and sometimes on different services. In Alberta, a 911 cell phone levy of \$0.95/month covers about half of primary PSAP costs. Similarly, landline and cellphone levies in New Brunswick are charged at \$0.97/month. In Newfoundland, \$0.75/month is levied on landline and cell phones to cover most of the primary PSAP costs. In a slightly different approach, Quebec has implemented a \$0.54/month levy on landline, cellphone, and internet services to cover party of primary PSAP costs, and in Saskatchewan, a landline and cell phone levy of \$2.17/month covers all primary PSAP functions and subsidizes partial police and fire dispatch costs.

Private companies

Implementing a private company funding mechanism or service delivery model for primary PSAP services could serve as an alternative to traditional public or end-user funding models, potentially enhancing resource availability.

In the UK, BT Plc., a telecommunication company, acts as the primary PSAP for emergency services. Rather than receiving direct government funding, all electronic communications networks and services providers are required to compensate BT Plc. for its service delivery.

Similarly, in Australia, Telstra serves as the primary PSAP and is contracted by the government to do so with supporting payment and an industry levy imposed on telecommunications carriers. The Australia Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates the service with each state and territory maintaining their own emergency services organizations.

In New Zealand, primary PSAP services are provided by Spark NZ, a telecommunications company, before being routed to the appropriate emergency service provider for secondary PSAP services and dispatch. Telecommunications levies are leveraged to support funding.

Analysis of alignment with objectives

Each model has been assessed for alignment with the defined provincial objectives in Figure 7 below.

	1	2	3	4
	Enhanced status quo	“Regulate” the sector	“Manage” the sector	“Become” the sector
System capacity	✗ Challenges persist with a predominant primary PSAP provider operating without province-wide oversight. Limited to coordinated efforts between local governments.	~ The Province could influence system capacity through standards and regulations but would not be directly responsible for capacity.	✓ The Province would be responsible for, legislatively enabled to manage capacity within the sector, including supporting rural and remote communities with access.	~ Coordination and collaboration across the sector may be reduced as responsibility would shift from local governments to the Province.
Financial sustainability	~ With E-Comm as the predominant service provider, local governments would be subject to volatile costs and levies.	~ Increased financial stability with the predominant primary PSAP service provider due to standardized service offerings.	✓ Further financial stability building on standardized offerings to include greater predictability and oversight of cost management and transformation priorities.	~ The cost to implement would not support financial sustainability, especially in the short term. The unknown impacts of NG911 could further increase this impact.
Provincial consistency	✗ Rural and remote areas without access to service would continue to go unaddressed; there would be no provincial standards set leaving these to be set individually by local governments.	~ Standards and regulations set province-wide would build towards provincial consistency in services provided. Rural and remote communities may still be required to fund or orchestrate PSAP services.	✓ Standards and regulations would be incorporated into a formal oversight framework and enforceable through legislative reform. It would be easier to achieve fairness across the province as the Province would become the voice for smaller communities.	✓ The Province would be directly responsible for defining standards and delivering primary PSAP services across the province.
Futureproofing	~ This model would continue to limit collaboration across the sector on current challenges (resilience, technology, etc.), let alone anticipating future challenges and opportunities.	~ Creates more efficiencies through standardization. Anticipating future needs and responding is largely left to local governments and PSAPs to coordinate with some central Provincial support.	✓ Further generates efficiencies through standardization and collaboration. Service delivery is resilient and able to respond to changing needs.	✗ The Province may be less nimble and less equipped to futureproof against future technology and requirements within the system.
Other considerations	~ Would be the least disruptive to current state model (the least effort to implement).			✗ Would require significant legislative change and significant risk ownership by the Province.

Legend
 ✓ Meets
 ~ Partially meets
 ✗ Does not meet

Recommended option

Figure 7: Analysis of options against Provincial objectives

In summary,

- **Option 1 - Enhanced status quo:** Selecting this model would require focus on effective communication strategies to manage and reshape stakeholder expectations, bring stakeholders together in more informal ways, and clarify roles and responsibilities within the existing framework. *Note that the ratings for “Financial sustainability” and “Futureproofing” are on the assumption that recommendations from the primary report “Independent Review of E-Comm” are accepted and implemented.*
- **Option 2 - “Regulate” the sector:** This model provides a balance between Provincial responsibility and gaining economies of scale. The role of the Province as an integrator simplifies the complex stakeholder environment and brings key service providers together, however it does not shift responsibility within the sector away from local governments.
- **Option 3 - “Manage” the sector:** In this model there is shared responsibility between all levels of government, increasing oversight and accountability, improving financial stability, and reinforcing the resilience of the sector through collaboration and integration between service providers.
- **Option 4 - “Become” the sector:** This model significantly enhances accountability of the Province but has some drawbacks. The Province would be responsible for services, the capacity to provide those services across the province would come at a significant cost and reduce the role of local

governments which is essential to emergency communications, and more broadly could limit collaboration across emergency management within communities.

Recommended model

The Province should consider targeting a future state that aligns with Option 3 where it is managing the emergency communications sector by ensuring adequate capacity to service the entire province through standardization and robust regulation, supported by a funding model that ensures greater efficiency and financial sustainability for all stakeholders. This supports a focus on improving both governance and standards to meet defined Provincial objectives. The path to achieving this end-state outlined in the next section and considers options 1 and 2 as short- and medium-term milestones in its pursuit.

In Option 3 as the future model, success is defined as:

- Clear roles and responsibilities for setting and enforcing PSAP service standards and performance metrics.
- Minimum standards and performance metrics that are well documented, measurable, and accepted for all Primary and Secondary PSAP service providers. Areas where the Province could set standards includes:
 - Standardized services that must be provided by Primary and/or Secondary PSAPs.
 - Minimum service levels for these services.
 - Minimum requirements for business continuity, resilience and/or redundancy.
- Communities have equitable access and service reliability with no significant regional variation in quality or 911 call answer times.
- Comparable access to modernized emergency communications services or improvement initiatives for both urban and rural communities.
- A clear vision for the future of PSAP service regulations and standards as technology and infrastructure evolve, and as public safety needs change.

Considerations for implementation

The path to Option 3 as a target state requires legislative reform which extends the timeline for implementation. Option 1 and 2 can be used as interim steps in building towards managing the sector as a target state.

Critical steps include presenting the Review's findings and recommendations to Government, confirming high-level policy direction on Government's desired future state outcomes for emergency communication service delivery and establishing a mandate to advance more detailed analysis and future state service delivery model design work. This detailed service modelling work would involve designing an enabling legislative, governance and organizational structure as well as developing detailed engagement and implementation plans. Once this work is complete, further policy direction will be required to confirm alignment with the recommended service delivery model and to establish a mandate to proceed with implementation activities.

In the short term (6-8 months), the Province should confirm high-level policy direction on its target state to enable detailed design and planning which will align appropriate resources, define timelines, and identify any dependencies.

In the medium term (8-18 months), the Province can start to implement its detailed plan, including starting to design future state standards. Even if the standards cannot yet be enforced, this is a good time to collaborate with PSAPs, local governments, and associations within the sector to define standards that will once become enforceable. This step allows early collaboration and integration in the sector and starts to build relationships in a new way moving towards the Province's future role.

Additional considerations for implementation encompass a range of factors, including stakeholder engagement, the establishment of a clear legislative framework which provides appropriate authorities for enforcement, and sustainable funding mechanisms to support the capacity building required to meet defined standards. By prioritizing these considerations, the Province can foster a more coordinated and responsive emergency communications sector that meets the evolving needs of its communities.

Stakeholder engagement

Effective stakeholder engagement is critical for the successful implementation of the future service delivery model. The complex stakeholder environment requires careful consideration to how the future provincial role impacts the future role of all stakeholders. An inclusive approach with consultation enhances operational feasibility but also will cultivate a sense of ownership and collaboration where specific needs and concerns can be identified and addressed. This will further support enhancing system capacity and could provide more efficiencies in futureproofing as collaboration within this ecosystem is critical.

Potential challenges include disagreement among parties, lack of buy-in, and conflicts with existing municipal responsibilities, specifically funding responsibilities for emergency communications services. Striking a balance between centralized oversight and local autonomy is essential to maintain flexibility while delivering the benefits that provincial standards and regulations can provide.

There is a critical need to specifically consider the needs of First Nations' communities in this consultation process. Involvement in the current state ecosystem is limited and an identified need for future state and the evolution of the sector. Additionally, with legislative changes anticipated, requirements outlined in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) must be considered.

Legislative framework

Establishing a clear legislative framework that enables the provincial role is foundational to defining roles, responsibilities and accountabilities within the ecosystem, but especially for creating clarity within the ecosystem so stakeholders will know how to engage with each other creating more awareness of the full ecosystem and all of the key actors, enhancing collaboration within, and having clear accountabilities to support decision making and progress. This framework should enable oversight capacity and enforcement while facilitating modernization efforts over time.

It is important to balance oversight with local autonomy and ownership, and federal regulation and policy. This can be facilitated through stakeholder engagement or in the framework itself; however, unique regional emergency communications needs should be considered when establishing standards as well as when establishing the authority to define standards.

Sustainable funding mechanisms

Developing sustainable funding mechanisms will be an important consideration for implementation. The Province must consider various funding structures and balance of funding responsibility between municipalities and the Province. As the Province defines future state requirements, there may be support required by PSAPs to meet the requirements set. Equitable distribution of resources across regions is critical to ensure that all communities, regardless of their size or location, have access to reliable emergency communications services.

Specific funding models to consider include provincial operational funding subsidies, modernization grants, and capital investments. Source funding options could include public funds from general revenue, property taxes, or end-user levies (such as landline, cell phones, or internet services).

Clearly defined funding roles promote predictability and are required as a part of clearly defining the Province's future role. Some considerations include:

- **Provincial cost exposure vs. influence:** Reducing financial exposure may limit the province's ability to shape service delivery or modernization priorities, especially where incentives or standards are needed.
- **Sustainability vs equity goals:** Cost-sharing models that reduce provincial burden may create fiscal pressures for smaller or rural municipalities, potentially limiting equitable access to service improvements.
- **Investment timing and modernization trajectory:** Delaying or deferring provincial investment may support cost control in the short term but hinder system-wide modernization or integration efforts in the long run.
- **Funding stability vs. financial risk:** Clear and stable funding arrangements can mitigate fiscal risk for the province, but excessive reliance on local sources may expose the province to financial instability during economic downturns, risking service disruption

The complexity and potential impact of rising operational costs, particularly with the transition to NG911 must be carefully managed. By prioritizing sustainable funding mechanisms, the Province can mitigate fiscal risks while supporting the sustainability and reliance of emergency communications services.

Capacity building and training

Capacity building and ongoing training for PSAP staff are fundamental. Personnel must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate effectively within the evolving technological landscape, especially given the upcoming transition to NG911, and the additional capabilities the new system will provide. This includes fostering interoperability between different systems, platforms, and key actors within the

emergency communications sector which will require consideration as the Province defines its future role inside a quickly changing environment.

Establishing transparent performance data that is accessible to both government and public will facilitate accountability and continuous improvement. While mandated standards can guarantee minimum service levels, it is important to balance these requirements with the flexibility needed for location considerations and needs. By investing in capacity building and training, the Province can enhance the overall effectiveness of the emergency communications ecosystem and its role as a regulator, supporting PSAPs in their ability to meet the challenges of the future.

Conclusion

There is a criticality associated with defining the future of the Provincial role within the emergency communications sector to address current state challenges, optimize operations within the sector, and ultimately protect public safety. Moving to a model where the Province actively manages the sector, with a role defined in legislation, will mitigate the risks currently observed with a complex stakeholder environment without a unified, clear governance framework. Although complex in its implementation due to legislative reform required, there is a staged approach which maximizes impact including supporting E-Comm in addressing recommendations within the Independent Review Report, signaling intent to change the role of the Province, and starting build relationships and foster collaboration within the sector.

Appendices

Appendix A: Jurisdictional scan

A jurisdictional scan was conducted to examine how other Canadian provinces and selected international jurisdictions organize, govern, and fund PSAP services. This work provides a perspective on the range of service delivery approaches. While every jurisdiction operates within its own legislative, geographic, and operational context, looking beyond BC's borders helps identify alternative models, governance structures, and funding mechanisms that could inform future decision-making through consideration to unique challenges, opportunities, and best practices. The inclusion of both domestic and international examples offers a richer understanding of the options available, illustrating how different jurisdictions have addressed common challenges in areas such as service consistency, modernization, and cost management.

National landscape

Across Canada, there is a noticeable trend toward more provincial models for service delivery, especially with the transition to NG911. For instance, provinces like Alberta and Quebec have established formal 911 standards that PSAPs must follow, promoting consistency and accountability. Similarly, some provinces, including New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, have created dedicated provincial 911 offices to oversee and manage their 911 systems. In Saskatchewan, a crown corporation manages and delivers PSAP services. However, it is important to note that this oversight often extends only to primary PSAP functions and does not encompass secondary PSAPs, or police, fire, or ambulance dispatch operations. Additionally, many jurisdictions have implemented a 911 levy on cell phones to support the system, providing a dedicated and additional funding source for maintaining and enhancing 911 services.

The following map provides a summary of the service delivery models adopted in jurisdictions across Canada.

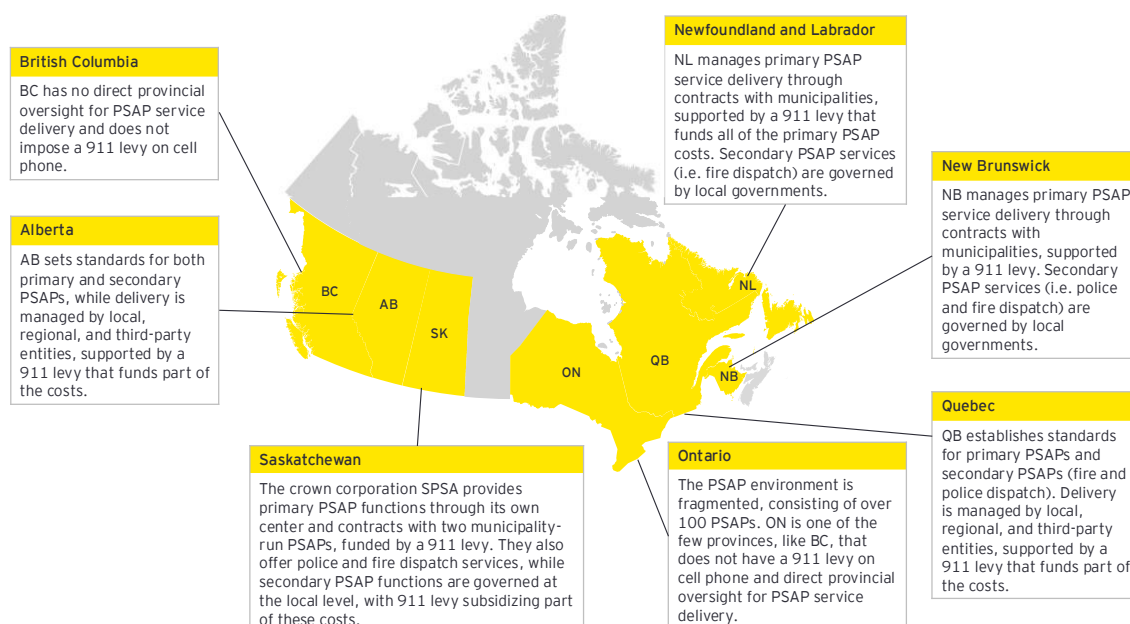





Figure 8: Overview of PSAP structures across Canada

Jurisdiction	Population	Size (km2)	Overview	Governance structure	Standards & regulations	Funding structure	System resilience
 Alberta	4.3M	635K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta sets standards for both primary and secondary PSAPs, while delivery is managed by local, regional, and third-party entities, supported by a 911 levy that funds part of the costs. There are 20 primary PSAPs and 6 secondary PSAPs in Alberta. PSAPs are primarily operated by municipalities, though some are managed by regional collectives. There is one private PSAP service provider in Alberta. 	While local governments are responsible for service delivery, service standards are governed by provincial requirements set under the Alberta Emergency 911 Act.	The Alberta Emergency 911 Act empowers the Alberta government to establish standards (Alberta 911 Standards) for both primary and secondary PSAPs.	A 911 cell phone levy of \$0.95 per month covers about half of the cost, with the remaining expenses funded by local governments.	Alberta enforces provincial 911 standards that include requirements for redundancy, cybersecurity and interoperability across primary and secondary PSAPs.
 New Brunswick	776K	71K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Brunswick manages primary PSAP service delivery through contracts with municipalities, supported by a 911 levy. Secondary PSAP services (i.e. police and fire dispatch) are governed by municipalities. Six primary PSAPs are run by municipalities, which also manage police and fire dispatch. RCMP and the Provincial Mobile Communications Centre are also leveraged for police dispatch and provincial enforcement support respectively. 	The province manages primary PSAP service delivery through contracts with municipalities. Police and fire dispatch services are governed by local governments.	The province has contracts with the six PSAPs in the province to define performance metrics and Standard Operating Procedures for primary PSAP services.	A 911 levy of \$0.97 per month on landline and cell phones funds part of the services with the remaining expenses funded by local governments.	Each PSAP has a designated alternate PSAP to take calls in the event of a failure. The province has mandated modernizing 911, including linking all PSAPs into one connected virtual centre, followed by a provincial dispatch system.
 Newfoundland and Labrador	510K	358K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newfoundland and Labrador manages primary PSAP service delivery through contracts with municipalities, supported by a 911 levy that funds all of the primary PSAP costs. Secondary PSAP services (i.e. fire dispatch) are governed by local governments. Two primary PSAPs are operated by municipalities, which also manage fire dispatch. Police dispatch is managed by RCMP and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC). 	The province manages primary PSAP service delivery through contracts with municipalities. Fire dispatch is governed by local governments.	The province has contracts with the two PSAPs in the province to set requirements for primary PSAP services.	A 911 levy of \$0.75 per month on landline and cell phones covers the cost for primary PSAP function. Local governments fund the fire dispatch costs.	Two PSAPs can transfer calls to each other in case of failure, with annual testing conducted for both manual and automatic shutdown procedures.



Jurisdiction	Population	Size (km2)	Overview	Governance structure	Standards & regulations	Funding structure	System resilience
 Ontario	14.2M	892K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PSAP environment is highly fragmented, consisting of over 100 PSAPs. Ontario is one of the few provinces, like BC, that does not have a 911 levy on cell phones and direct provincial oversight for PSAP service delivery. Most PSAPs are operated by municipal fire and police departments. Two private PSAP service providers in the province. RCMP and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) also operate several PSAPs in Ontario. 	Most PSAPs are governed by municipalities, with some exceptions for those operated by RCMP and OPP.	No provincial standards or regulations. Service standards are set individually by local governments or service providers.	Excludes those operated by provincial or federal agencies, PSAPs are primarily funded by local government, while the province provides grants to support the transition to NG911.	With several large centers operating in the region, Ontario maintains a coordinated backup system where agencies can support and back up each other.
 Quebec	8.5M	1.3M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quebec establishes standards for primary PSAPs and secondary PSAPs (fire and police dispatch). Delivery is managed by local, regional, and third-party entities, supported by a 911 levy that funds part of the costs. Twenty-two municipalities operate their own PSAPs. Three nonprofit organizations and one private entity provide services to other municipalities. One of the nonprofit PSAPs provides services to half of all municipalities in Quebec. 	While municipalities are responsible for service delivery, provincial standards govern service standards and quality.	The Emergency Communication Centres Act empowers the Quebec government to establish standards for primary and certain secondary PSAPs. All PSAPs are also required to obtain Certificate of Compliance issued by the Ministry of Public Safety.	A 911 levy of \$0.54 per month on landline, cell and IP phones covers part of the cost, with the remaining expenses funded by municipalities. The levy is managed by l'Agence municipale de financement et de développement des Centres d'urgence 9-1-1 du Québec, a non-profit organization, to ensure equitable fund distribution to PSAPs.	All PSAPs are mandated to implement dual-level backup system. In case of primary backup centre is unable to process rerouted calls, an additional backup system must be readily available.
 Saskatchewan	1.1M	577K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Crown corporation, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) operates one PSAP centre, with a second one set to begin operations next year. It provides primary PSAP services, as well as fire and police dispatch. SPSA also contracts with two municipality -run PSAPs (Saskatchewan Police and Regina Police) to provide 911 call answering service in the province. These PSAPs also offer police and fire dispatch services, while secondary PSAP functions are governed at the local level. 	SPSA governs its own PSAP centre and contracts with two municipality-run PSAPs to provide primary PSAP services. Police and fire dispatch are governed by local governments.	SPSA governs its own PSAP centre. It contracts with the two municipality-run PSAPs to set requirements for primary PSAP services via service contracts.	A 911 levy of \$2.17 per month on landline and cell phones funds primary PSAP functions and subsidizes police and fire dispatch costs. Local governments pay a user fee for fire and police dispatch services.	Three primary PSAPs back each other up; if one site is busy or needs to evacuate, calls will roll over to the other PSAPs.




Table 1: Canadian jurisdictions summary⁶




⁶ Ambulance services and PSAPs operated directly by federal or provincial agencies (e.g., RCMP) are not included in the jurisdictional comparisons.

International landscape

Across the globe, centralized or consolidated primary PSAPs is common, fostering improved interoperability, standardization of protocols, and operational efficiency. For instance, emergency calls in the United Kingdom are answered by one of seven call handling centers operated by a telecommunications company. Similarly, in New Zealand and Australia, emergency calls are first answered by telecommunications companies that provided centralized primary PSAPs services.

Many international jurisdictions are actively adopting artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies to enhance call handling efficiency and situational awareness. Technologies such as automated call triage systems and real-time data sharing applications are being utilized to streamline operations or improve decision-making.

Jurisdiction	Population	Size (km2)	Overview	Lessons Learned
 Oregon, US	4.2M	255K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local delivery with state coordination: 43 PSAPs covering 36 counties, operated locally under coordination from the State 911 Program, overseen by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) . ▪ Governance includes a PSAP Advisory Committee, with the OEM responsible for setting PSAP operations, equipment standards, mapping and funding oversight. ▪ Funding is supported by an Emergency Communication Tax of \$1.25/month for each phone line or 911-capable device, with a state-managed account that funds PSAP operations, infrastructure, training and NG911 transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centralized operations hub: In Portland, the Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) serves as a centralized call-taking and dispatch center under the Public Safety Division Deputy City Administrator of the Portland government, consolidates call taking and dispatch across multiple police, fire and EMS agencies in the Portland metro area, improving interoperability and standardizing protocols. ▪ Use of AI technology: Voicebot answers the call, ask short triage questions, and routes the caller to other resources or connect the caller to a live call taker if it sounds like a real public safety matter, reducing hold times for critical calls and alleviating pressure on call-takers.
 Texas, US	31M	696K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local delivery with state coordination: A state agency, the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC), set directions and technology standards, develops funding formulas, and distribute grants to local and regional 911 agencies. It also oversees the statewide migration to NG911, ensuring compliance with federal and industry standards (NENAI3). ▪ Regional and county-level agencies operate PSAPs, supported by local funding and governance. ▪ Funding for these operations includes a 911 fee of \$0.5/month for each phone line (landline, mobile, VoIP) and a 1% intrastate long-distance surcharge. These fees are collected and distributed by CSEC to local areas based on population and service needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-agency operations hub: In Austin-Travis County, the Combined Transportation, Emergency, and Communications Center (CTECC) brings 911 and 311 call-taking, emergency dispatch (EMS, police and fire), and transportation operations together under one roof. This co-location enhances coordination and real-time information sharing, also eliminates unnecessary overlaps in staffing, equipment, and procedures.
 Washington, US	7.8M	185K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local delivery with state coordination: The Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division, which houses the state 911 office, manages NG911 infrastructure, funding and standards, while 78 PSAPs operated by counties and municipalities handle call-taking and dispatch services across all 39 counties. ▪ A statewide 911 excise tax of \$0.95/month for each wireline, wireless, VoIP and prepaid wireless service funds infrastructure, PSAP support, modernization, training and public education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civilian-led primary PSAP with specialized service model: In 2021, the Seattle 911 call center transitioned from the Police Department to the civilian-led Community Assisted Response & Engagement (CARE) Department to handle all 911 police calls, manages non-emergency calls, while the Seattle Fire Department operates as a secondary PSAP handling fire and ambulance dispatch, enabling specialized service delivery. ▪ AI-assisted dispatch: The Seattle Fire Department partners with Corti.ai to provide real-time AI support during emergency medical calls. AI suggests questions and identifies critical symptoms, enhancing dispatcher decision-making and response accuracy.

Jurisdiction	Population	Size (km2)	Overview	Lessons Learned
 Denmark	6M	43K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National coordination: The Danish Emergency Management Agency under the Ministeriet for Samfundssikkerhed og Beredskab (Ministry of Resilience and Preparedness) oversees the national 112 system, while five regional healthcare authorities manage Emergency Medical Coordination Centres (EMCCs). ▪ All 112 calls are routed initially to police call centres (except in Copenhagen, where calls first go to the Copenhagen Fire Brigade). Police triage calls and forward medical emergencies to the appropriate EMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Live Video Streaming from Caller: EMCCs can request that callers live-stream video from their smartphones via an SMS link to improve situational awareness and response.
 Netherlands	18M	37K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National coordination: The Landelijke Meldkamer Samenwerking (LMS) is the national dispatch network managed by the Dutch National Police under the Ministry of Justice and Security. LMS ensures a permanent PSAP network, system continuity, unified protocols, shared Information and Communication Technology and coordinated risk management. ▪ The country has transitioned from 25 regional dispatch centres to 10 regional PSAPs, each handling police, ambulance and fire calls. Call-takers triage and transfer incidents to dedicated call handlers for each discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ System redundancy: The 10 regional PSAPs operate as a single virtual dispatch system, enabling automatic call transfer if one centre becomes overloaded or fails. ▪ Enhanced caller engagement via mobile application: The 112NL App allows users to call 112, send personal details and emergency type, automatically share location and exchange chat messages with control rooms for faster, more accurate response.
 United Kingdom	69M	244K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National call-handling and oversight: Emergency calls to 999 or 112 are prioritized by communications providers and routed to one of seven BT Plc (telecommunication company) call-handling centers. Calls are then transferred to the appropriated emergency service control rooms (142 local centres) serving police, ambulance, fire, and coastguard services based on automatic location data. ▪ Ofcom regulates telecom aspects through the General Conditions of Entitlement, while technical and operational oversight is provided by the 999-112 Liaison Committee under the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT). 	<p>In 2023, BT experienced a major emergency call handling failure due to software flaws and inadequate failover systems, key lessons learned from this incident include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addressing software update flaws and enhancing failover system to improve resilience. ▪ Strengthening escalation protocols for fast notification of emergency services, government and the public. ▪ Developing clear, unified public messaging for effective crisis communication. ▪ Conducting regular multi-agency resilience exercises to improve preparedness. ▪ Auditing vendor risks and diversity technology dependencies to reduce vulnerabilities from reliance on a single provider.



Jurisdiction	Population	Size (km2)	Overview	Lessons Learned
 Victoria, Australia	7M	227K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National and state emergency call coordination: Triple zero (000) calls are initially answered nationally by Telstra, a telecommunications company. Calls requiring emergency services in Victoria are transferred to Triple Zero Victoria (TZV), which is responsible for call-taking and dispatch for police, fire, ambulance and state emergency services. ▪ The Australia Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates the national 000 service. Each state and territory maintains its own emergency service organizations. 	<p>Victoria recently reformed its Triple Zero system by establishing TZV as a statutory authority with enhanced governance and funding frameworks. Key lessons learned from this transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong oversight and clear governance frameworks are essential for enhancing accountability and improving operational performance. ▪ A skilled and diverse board is necessary to provide effective strategic leadership and ensure community interests are represented. ▪ Combining stable state funding with supplementary revenue sources supports financial stability and the development of technical expertise.
 New Zealand	5.3M	268K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centralized emergency call service: The 111 emergency is centralized, with all calls initially answered by Spark NZ, a telecommunications company, before being forwarded to the relevant emergency service provider (police, fire and ambulance). This approach ensures standardized service across the country. ▪ The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) regulates the service, with operational responsibilities governed by the Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Code 2020 and oversight by the Telecommunications Forum (TCF). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Automated call routing: Spark NZ employs an automated system to triage calls exceeding a 45-second wait, with full activation capabilities as needed to supplement human operators. ▪ Resilient communications centres: New Zealand Police operates five communication centres with business continuity plans and backup capabilities, enabling mutual support during disruptions.

Table 2: International jurisdictions summary

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