



Fact Sheet

Wireless Priority Service

What is WPS? Wireless Priority Service (WPS) is a capability developed in response to White House tasking following the September 11 attacks that improves end-to-end call completion on wireless public telephone networks. It supports national leadership, including Congress, Federal, State and local government, and other authorized national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) users. In the event of wireless network congestion, a WPS user invokes WPS by dialing *272 prior to dialing the desired destination number. The WPS call then receives priority over public calls, thereby greatly increasing the probability of call completion. WPS complies with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Second Report and Order requirements. WPS calls do not preempt calls in progress or deny the general public's use of the radio spectrum. WPS is in a constant state of readiness.

Who Uses WPS? Typical WPS users are responsible for the command and control functions critical to management of, and response to, national security and emergency situations, particularly during the first 24 to 72 hours following an event. WPS users perform critical NS/EP functions including continuity of Government and national security leadership, as well as NS/EP functions in Federal, State, local, and tribal government, critical infrastructure sectors in industry, and non-profit organizations.

Why is WPS Important? NS/EP personnel rely on wireless communications services to perform critical functions, including those areas related to leadership, safety, maintenance of law and order, finance, and public health. WPS can be extremely beneficial during an emergency in which the public telecommunications networks are degraded by congestion or damage to the infrastructure. Using WPS, NS/EP users have a greater chance of call completion than those without the service.

What Else Should I Know?

- WPS is complementary to, and can be most effective when used in conjunction with, the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) to ensure a high probability of call completions in both the wireline and wireless portions of the public switched telephone network (PSTN).
- WPS is available in all nationwide networks and some regional networks as follows: AT&T Mobility, Sprint Nextel, Sprint PCS, T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, Cellcom, C Spire, and SouthernLINC.
- WPS is an add-on feature to commercial wireless service; no special phones are required.
- Users apply for WPS through the National Communications System. Users are responsible for any service provider charges for activation, service, and per-minute usage associated with WPS.
- The National Communications System is responsible for WPS infrastructure enhancements and the day-to-day management of WPS, with oversight responsibilities residing with the FCC.

For Further Information: Please contact the NCS NS/EP Priority Telecommunications Service Center, 866-NCS-CALL (866-627-2255) or 703-676-CALL (703-676-2255).

◆ Web Site: <http://www.ncs.gov> ◆ E-mail: wps@dhs.gov