



Fact Sheet

Wireless Priority Service

What is WPS? Wireless Priority Service (WPS) is a capability developed by the National Communications System in response to White House tasking to meet National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP) requirements. WPS improves call completion capabilities on wireless public telephone networks. In the event of network congestion, a user invokes WPS by dialing *272 prior to dialing the desired destination number. The call then receives priority features, such as queuing for the next available resource, thereby greatly increasing the probability of call completion. WPS complies with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Second Report and Order rules and 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? It supports national leadership, Federal, State, local, tribal government, and other authorized National Security and Emergency Preparedness users. 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.

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, transportation, public health and critical infrastructure. Acts of terrorism, natural disasters, power outages, cable cuts, cyber attacks and software problems can cripple the telephone services of an entire region. WPS can be extremely beneficial during an emergency in which the public telecommunications networks are degraded by congestion or damage to the telecommunications infrastructure.

What Else Should I Know?

- WPS is available nationwide in Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) and in Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) networks. National carriers offering WPS include AT&T Mobility, Sprint Nextel, Sprint PCS, T-Mobile, and Verizon Wireless. Regional carriers include Cellcom, Cellular South, and SouthernLINC.
- WPS is an add-on feature to commercial wireless service; no special cell phones are required.
- 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.
- 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.
- WPS users are assigned one of five priority levels based on the FCC priority level designations.

For Further Information: For questions about the WPS program, please contact the NCS NS/EP Priority Telecommunications Service Center, 866-NCS-CALL (866-627- 2255) or 703-760-CALL (703-760-2255).

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