

911 – Wireless Accuracy

The Public Safety Answering Points [PSAPs] across the State of Iowa are all Phase 2 capable. The accuracy of the call is determined by the phone service provider equipment, not the PSAP. The service provider can use either the GPS coordinates of the phone or triangulation of tower signals or a combination of both to deliver an accurate location. The caller's location makes a difference. If the caller is inside a structure: metal buildings, concrete, or other dense material will obstruct the signal. The terrain; trees and hills may obstruct or distort the signal. Signal strength: the distance from the nearest cell tower. Tower capacity: how busy is the cell tower you are closest to, will the signal be picked up by that tower, or sent to another that may be in a different county. The network; is the signal captured by a GPS chip in the phone, or is it being calculated by signal triangulation. If the caller stays on the line long enough to get an accurate signal, and they are not in a dense structure or in very rough terrain, we are better able pinpoint a wireless caller.