



RapidSOS 

# **The Ultimate Guide to Integrating Your Business with Public Safety**

# Executive Summary

Today, public safety is top of mind for businesses of all sizes, across almost every industry. Protecting employees, customers, and communities through lone and remote work environments, rising crime, school shootings, and a lingering pandemic is an ever-evolving challenge.

Innovative companies are looking to partner with public safety, whether locally or at scale, to ensure their people are protected when they need it most. They know that in order to truly offer protection, they need to have solutions for emergency situations when first responders are called for help. They're sharing data from their devices, platforms, and sensors with first responders to help save lives during emergencies.

However, finding the right solution for your business can be just as tough as the challenges you're looking to solve. In the process of building the world's first intelligent safety platform that supports over 150 million emergencies each year, RapidSOS has experienced and overcome those challenges — and we'll share those learnings with you.

## In this guide, we'll cover:

- Benefits to sharing data with public safety
- How to partner with public safety at scale
- How to choose a public safety data integration





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## Benefits to sharing data with public safety

The past few years have shown us that the world is continuing to grow more complicated than ever before. Record-breaking hurricane seasons, landscape changing wildfires, and a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic have families around the country thinking about how they can protect themselves. In fact, over 58 percent of Americans [feel actively worried about their safety every day](#). Consequently, trust and safety now go hand-in-hand with customer experience.

Taking safety seriously at every step of the customer journey is critical for businesses of every size. From the ads you serve to the customer support you provide, protecting people from danger is crucial to building brand equity.

Safety, however, is no longer a secondary consideration in today's market. To stand out in a world that's increasingly concerned about staying safe, businesses need to find ways to protect their customers, employees, or communities as a part of their core offerings.



1.

## Give your customers peace of mind

To put it simply, **people want better protection**, and are looking to the products and services they use to help make their lives simpler — and safer. They're not just looking for preventive safety measures, they want to feel protected during emergencies as well.

That means their security systems need to get help on-scene faster, their cars need to alert authorities when they're in an accident, and their connected devices need to be able to call for help instantly.

In order to achieve this, companies are providing customers with a variety of different safety measures in their products, including:

- Panic buttons
- Monitoring services
- SOS apps
- Emergency notifications

When integrated with public safety, these solutions connect customers with first responders, sharing information through the app, platform, or product, to ensure an efficient and personalized service. This provides first responders with the emergency intelligence they need to arrive on-scene faster and better informed.

<sup>1</sup> DKC Consumer Survey, August 2020

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



of Americans would like 911 to receive additional data in the event of an emergency<sup>1</sup>



of Americans believe that providing more data to first responders would save lives<sup>2</sup>

In addition to customers and employees, our first responders are also eager for better ways to serve their communities, through new technologies, and moreover through new partnerships. As Monica Million, Immediate Past President of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) describes it, "changing consumer expectations has a dramatic impact on 911 operations...there's not only a demand from technology companies, but a desire within 911 to serve their communities better."

By connecting their data to 911, companies are demonstrating their commitment to transforming emergency response and to the health and safety of their customers.

2.

## Empower faster and more effective emergency response



of dispatchers say traditional 911 infrastructure does not reliably provide location for mobile calls.



of Americans believe the information shared with 911 from a voice call alone is a sufficient way of accessing the right help.

Over 250 million times a year, Americans call 911 in some of their darkest hours. Whether a car breaks down in the middle of a snow storm, a family member experiences a heart attack, or a home or business is broken into, we know help is just a phone call away. However, few of us are aware of how the emergency response system actually works. How does a call taker dispatch a first responder? What information is sent to telecommunicators when a call for help is made? It surprises many that, until recently, the 911 infrastructure was too archaic to accurately locate callers on a consistent basis.

Since the emergency number system's inception in the 1960s, the technology used by these telecommunicators has hardly adapted to changing communications and data paradigms. Telecommunicators rely on the limited information a phone call can provide to dispatch emergency resources — that means a caller in need has to verbally articulate the nature of their emergency, their location, and any other relevant details in order to receive assistance.

Considering [over 80 percent of 911 calls come from mobile phones](#), 911 telecommunicators have to take additional steps to locate most emergency calls, in addition to acquiring additional information about the emergency. They have to take additional time to ask callers a series of questions to find out what resources they need to send and how to triage the emergency relative to other calls in the area.

Our heroic first responders often overcome the obstacle of an antiquated emergency response system without issue. But you don't have to look far to hear a story that details the consequences of first responders not arriving fast enough, or dispatchers sending help to the wrong location or without the right equipment — simply because they couldn't receive sufficient information about the emergency.

So how do we solve this challenge? The answer lies in giving 911 centers and first responders access to critical emergency data. By connecting their life-saving data to 911, companies can partner with public safety agencies at scale to share data, integrate workflows, and power industry-leading emergency safety features.

The result is reduced response times and better emergency outcomes. By involving first responders the moment a customer needs emergency assistance, and sharing information that can benefit the response, companies can offer real-time protection for their customers. For those in the security, healthcare, automotive, or insurance industries, the benefits are self-evident and manifold.

Across automotive accidents, medical emergencies, and building security, getting help on scene faster can reduce lethality, suffering, and monetary damages. In car accidents, it can be the difference between life and death for traumatic brain injuries. During cardiac arrests, it can drastically alter outcomes. During home invasions, it can change a massive insurance claim to just a new window installation.

<sup>3</sup> US Dispatcher Survey, August 2020

<sup>4</sup> DKC Consumer Survey, August 2020

3.

## Solve the 911 data challenge

There are a multitude of different types of emergencies, from medical emergencies to car accidents and even home or commercial break-ins. Each of these scenarios demand a different type of response from 911, meaning first responders on scene need different types of tools, training, and above all else, thorough and accurate information.

Data from connected devices, platforms, and sensors, can answer many of these questions for telecommunicators instantly. For example, during a car accident, a person's mobile device can share their triangulated GPS and device location. Their connected car can share telematic data like crash detection, vehicle information, airbag deployment, and even potential injuries. Their connected health device, like a personal emergency response system, can share medical histories, allergies, and even emergency contacts with the telecommunicator.

However, too much data can overwhelm telecommunicators: they need information and tools that fit seamlessly into their workflows, so they can best leverage information in situations where every second counts. As datasets become more complex, and sources vary in size and scope, it's critical that this new infrastructure is built in partnership with public safety. They need to be able to trust the data source and operationalize the data in order to impact response times.

In addition to accurate location data, first responders need different sets of data for different emergencies:

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

-  Demographics
-  Medical history
-  Allergies
-  Medications
-  COVID-19 test results

### CAR ACCIDENTS

-  Location
-  Crash notification
-  Airbag deployment
-  Time of impact
-  Car make and model

### HOME/COMMERCIAL SECURITY

-  Location of break-in
-  Building blueprints/layout
-  Gunfire detection
-  AEDs on premises
-  Door controls

## How to partner with public safety at scale

Partnering with public safety is no easy task. Although there are incentives to work together, the nation's EMS and 911 systems are fragmented: there is no unifying body at the federal level to simplify the process of working with public safety. There are over [18,000 EMS agencies](#) and [6,000 Emergency Communications Centers \(ECCs\)](#) in the US alone, each with their own communities, budgets, and needs. The most obvious, and perhaps most impactful way to work with public safety is to share life-saving data with 911 during emergencies.

Trust, relationships, and collaboration are crucial to creating a scalable, meaningful safety solution. Luckily, there are several ways to overcome these challenges.



*"Every decision (Emergency Communication Centers) make affects the lives of people in our communities. Partnering with public safety requires a relationship with trust and credibility."*

**Jamison Peevyhouse**

Vice President of Public Safety  
RapidSOS

1.

## Integrating with an intelligent safety platform

Many companies are turning to intelligent safety platforms like RapidSOS to efficiently and securely share data with public safety agencies nationwide. RapidSOS is an intelligent safety platform that securely links life-saving data from 500+ million connected devices, apps and sensors directly to safety agents, 911 and first responders globally. RapidSOS powers safety solutions and connected devices like panic buttons, emergency notifications, and more, through a direct link to 911.

RapidSOS was built over 10+ years in collaboration with public safety to ensure usability in emergency response workflows. With nationwide coverage and accessible by over 15K first responder agencies, RapidSOS can scale nationwide, deploy customizable workflows, and can be integrated in just 8 lines of code. An intelligent safety platform can also build a bridge between a monitoring center or solution and first responders. A traditional monitoring center would have an agent or call taker relay emergency information to 911 on behalf of your customers. This works well in most emergencies, but still requires key information, ranging from location to multimedia, that help first responders save lives. Brands that partner with an intelligent safety platform like RapidSOS are enabled to securely link life-saving data from their connected devices, apps and sensors to RapidSOS safety agents, 911 and first responders globally.

2.

## Building it yourself

Businesses can attempt to build relationships with individual ECCs, target their local or state governing bodies, or work with community leaders on safety initiatives. Depending on the scale of the business, this approach can build grassroots support for a safety solution, while making inroads with public safety at-large.

However, building it yourself can take a considerable amount of time to earn trust, understand the institutions and the industry, leverage that intelligence to create a safety solution, and then deploy it and support it across 6,000+ 911 centers and thousands of different software systems. Similarly, it takes time to create a solution that's tested and validated by first responders, as well as training them to use it. If data isn't actionable for first responders or they aren't trained on how to use it, it can sometimes only cause distraction and delays in the intense operational environment of a 911 center.



3.

## Working with consumer safety providers

Another approach is to work with a consumer safety provider that provides a third-party platform or service to consumers. Typically, these services leverage monitoring centers or other third party systems to interface with public safety on behalf of consumers. These services also are typically billed to the end user and offered as an add-on or optional feature to offset the extra cost.

The monitoring center will receive a notification of an emergency, whether through an app, triggering a physical panic button or device, or a system like a security panel. The monitoring center will call the end user, their emergency contacts, or supervisors to confirm the emergency, and then call 911 for assistance if necessary.

This system works well and ensures that a human is available to verify the incident. The challenge is that all of that work completed by the third party monitoring center must then be verbally relayed to the 911 agency. If a picture is worth a thousand words, verbally explaining the video feed of a burglary in progress is challenging, particularly in the intense operational environment of a 911 center.

4.

## Collaborating with public safety software providers

Public safety software providers build technologies and tools for first responders to use in the field. These softwares are usually built for a particular need or niche within the public safety industry, like GIS mapping solutions, computer-aided dispatch systems, and call-taking softwares. These systems serve the immediate needs of public safety, but often in very particular situations.

Businesses that have a local need to provide data for a specific use case, may find strong use cases for integrating directly with public safety software providers. For example, many city camera requests for proposals (RFPs) will require the system integrator to also integrate the camera feeds into the existing 911 system.

The challenge is that no 911 software vendor has universal scale: on average, ECCs use between four and eight different systems to manage an emergency. Consequently, in order to effectively protect people in emergencies, your business will require integrations across multiple systems to achieve scale, since ECCs are likely to use different softwares for different purposes.

## Factors to consider when purchasing emergency safety solutions

When purchasing emergency safety solutions, there are several details to consider, beyond price and scale. It's vital to find a way to understand how to work with public safety, whether it's through a third-party monitoring center, a public safety software, or an intelligent safety platform. Before you decide which solution to pursue, you should consider the following:

### **What service or experience am I trying to provide for my end-users?**

Keeping people safe during emergencies is part of a larger safety contingency plan. Ideally, no user, whether it's a paying customer or a salaried employee, should experience an emergency while using or relying on your business – but it's important to be prepared if they do. Consider how your emergency safety solution will integrate with your safety systems at large, especially as it relates to your offerings. The user experience should be seamless, supportive, and above all else, protective. Consider whether your emergency safety solution has an end-to-end offering from the caller facing an emergency to first responders in the field.

### **What data can my company share with public safety?**

Getting the right data to the right place at the right time in an emergency can be the difference between life and death, and the first step in that process is securing the correct data. Public safety generally needs data that helps locate, triage, and evaluate emergencies before first responders arrive on scene. Different types of emergencies demand different types of information. Consider what kind of data you can share from your products, devices, or platforms, that might be usable during emergencies, and whether or not that information can be shared with them through your emergency safety solution.

### **How will my company manage its relationship with public safety?**

Integrating data is a challenge in and of itself, but managing the integration requires careful thought and planning as well. Consider how your company will manage this relationship into the future. Larger emergency safety solutions often have a dedicated public safety team that focuses on outreach, contingency planning, and more, while others can manage with a liaison or dedicated person. Consider the size, scope, and scale of the user base you're serving. Be sure that your solution can accommodate and train first responders, and can assist you in navigating the complexities of the public safety ecosystem.

## How to choose the public safety data integration provider that's right for you

Understanding the public safety landscape, as well as your business needs, is a great first step in choosing a public safety data integration. Acknowledging the challenges first responders face, as well as the opportunity your solution can offer to benefit both your end users and the greater good, is a solid foundation to build on.

Now it's time to find the right solution for your business' needs. Like any software investment, it's important to consider budget, business needs, and expected outcomes. Beyond that, however, are a list of wants and must-haves for any public safety integration provider — after all, not all integrations are created equal.



# A Grading Chart to Integrate your Business with Public Safety

Use this worksheet when evaluating your options to find the right fit and the best value for your business:

Evaluate the solution based on the criteria relevant to you: does it check the boxes you need to keep your people safe? There's no price you can put on a life, and no worse outcome for an emergency than the one that could have been prevented.

Feature	Description	RapidSOS	Provider 1	Provider 2
<b>Securely connects your life-saving data directly to 911</b>				
Official 911 Service Provider	The partner is recognized as an official service provider for 911 agencies by the FCC.	✓		
Nationwide coverage	The integration has nationwide coverage and can be used by any Emergency Communications Center.	✓		
Real-time updates	Data can be shared in real-time with 911 telecommunicators during emergencies.	✓		
Voice call support	The integration can support voice calls and connect callers with the correct 911 center or with emergency contacts.	✓		
Emergency contact notifications	The integration can notify and share relevant information with emergency contacts during emergencies.	✓		
Monitoring center connection	The integration can connect to your monitoring center if applicable.	✓		
Emergency verification from monitoring centers	The integration enables your monitoring center to call customers to verify emergencies.	✓		
<b>A proven and trusted partner</b>				
Customizable workflows	Workflows can be customized and tailored to your product's unique use case.	✓		
Secure and reliable connection	The integration can securely and reliably share data with the highest standards for encryption and data privacy.	✓		
Experienced integration team	The partner has significant experience with and knowledge of integrating data into the public safety system.	✓		
911 training and utilization	911 telecommunicators and first responders are trained and actively use the solution.	✓		
Insights and analytics	The integration can provide insights and analytics into emergency calls, volume, etc.	✓		

In partnership with public safety, RapidSOS has created the world's first intelligent safety platform that securely links life-saving data from 500M+ connected devices directly to RapidSOS Safety Agents, emergency services, and first responders. Through the platform, RapidSOS provides intelligent data that supports nationwide coverage, across 250 million emergencies annually. Together with innovative companies recognized as RapidSOS Ready, RapidSOS is supporting first responders in saving millions of lives each year.

To find out how you can join the RapidSOS Ready community, [talk to an expert today](#).