

## Kari's Law: What it Means and How to Comply

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On September 1, 2016 a Texas law designed to make it easier to call 911 emergency services from a commercial phone system went into effect in Texas. "Kari's Law" is named after Kari Hunt, who was stabbed to death in a Marshall, Texas hotel room in front of her three small children.



Kari Hunt was at the Baymont Inn & Suites in Marshall, Texas on December 1, 2013 when she was killed by her estranged husband, Brad Allen Dunn. Kari's three children were there when it happened. Her nine-year-old daughter repeatedly attempted to call 911, but could not get an outside line.

Soon after her murder, Kari's father, Hank Hunt, began a [petition](#) to make a law requiring businesses to have phone systems with easy access to 911 dispatchers. That effort has put Kari's Law on the books in 29 states.

Ultimately Kari's Law (H.R.582) was signed into Federal law on February 16, 2018. The compliance date for the Federal version of the law is now February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for all states. The text of the law can be found here...

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/582/text>

In summary, the law says that businesses with multi-line telephone systems (MLTS; i.e., PBX or key-system) must comply by the specified date.

Compliance requires that:

1. **Dial 911**—any phone on the MLTS must be setup such that anyone dialing just "9" and "1" and "1" will immediately get put through to a 911 emergency dispatch operator.
2. **Notification at Site**—further, the MLTS must be able to notify the organization administrating the MLTS that the 911 event took place, and from which extension on the MLTS it took place.

## Dialing 911

Dialing just “911” means just that. No prefix or postfix digits are allowed. Not even a send button, such as a “#” character, is permitted. Dial “911” and the call is immediately “in progress”.

On many legacy phone systems currently in use, a digit prefix allows for various dial-plans to be created that are variable in length. For example, a station-to-station call can be done with just three or four digits dialed, whereas, a long-distance call might require 11 digits (1+npa-nxx-xxxx). Traditionally, the prefix “9” is used to tell the MLTS that the caller is dialing an outside line, followed by a variable number of digits.

For later model PBXs, building a dial-plan to satisfy this new law should not be a problem, but for older key-systems and PBXs, this indeed might be a serious problem, as the prefix arrangement might have little or no flexibility, depending on how old the MLTS technology is.

Potentially, the owner of an older MLTS *may need to buy a new phone system to comply with Kari’s Law.*

## Notification at Site

The second part of the new regulation requires that when someone dials 911 from within an organization using the MLTS system, the administrator of that MLTS must be notified.

### Underlying Logic

**Example**—In this example, the multi-line telephone system is in a motel of 50 rooms, with a telephone in each room. The MLTS at the motel has a single business telephone registered with the phone carrier, (as opposed to a telephone number for each phone) with a telephone number for the front desk.

The reason having only one registered number is economics. Having 51 numbers registered would be costly for the MLTS operator. Further, the MLTS operator wants to control which number is sent as caller ID to the PSTN (public switched telephone network), and what number the public sees and dials to reach the establishment.

Having a larger set of Direct Inbound Dial (DID) numbers is untenable for a number of reasons. One of the main reasons for the existence of MLTS (PBXs and key-systems), is that they act as a mini exchange, negating the need to provision large sets of DID number pools for an organization.



In the example of the hotel, room #34 dials 911. The call goes through but before the 911 agent can talk to the caller the phone call gets cut off. Although the agent did not talk to the caller, the agent now has the number as well as the address of the MLTS establishment, as the number and address are registered with the national 911 directory. The first responders arrive at the hotel's front office, but short of knocking on each door of every room there is no way for them to know which room requires emergency services.

One solution would be to tie a unique DID to each phone in each room, but then the MLTS owner would need to register 51 unique addresses (address + room number) with the national 911 directly. This is a very expensive proposition, as each registration comes with a monthly 911 charge. Further, this strategy lacks all the other benefits of made possible by an MLTS.

A modern PBX might permit email, text, or phone notification of the 911 call to be sent to the MLTS operator, but most legacy systems in operation today are unable to fulfill this part of the law, leaving an expensive full system upgrade as the only viable option.

## **The Cyclix Networks Solution**

Cyclix Networks has analyzed the problem and is happy to report that its Business-Connect™ product line is fully complaint with H.R.582 (Karis Law). Best of all, Business-Connect™ requires “no capital expense” to upgrade to a bundled PBX, phones, service and support.

## **Dialing 911 Solved**

Business-Connect™ is a modern PBX (private branch exchange), with fully programmable dial-plan capabilities. This allows Cyclix Networks to custom configure the dial plan to meet H.R.582 with no compromises. To dial 911...

- No line needs to be selected
- No prefix needs to be appended
- No send button needs to be dialed

...the caller simply dials “911”, the call goes off hook, calls the PSAP (public safety answering point) and the caller is connected. With Cyclix Networks Business-Connect™ at no time is there any situation where this would work differently.

## **Notification Sent**

Business-Connect™ has the ability to notify the MLTS administrator in real time that someone has dialed 911. Here are the options for seeing who dialed 911 on the Business-Connect™ system:



- **CDR report notification**—via a computer screen desktop, 911 calls can be seen in real-time on the Call-Detail-Report (CDR) screen
- **Email notification**—when any extension dials 911, a custom call-hook is setup that will send an email, or emails, to any specified email addresses. The contents of the email will specify...
  - The time the 911 call was made
  - From which extension the 911 call was made
- **Text message notification**—all the same features described for email apply for text, with full real-time notifications made possible via smart-phone text services.
- **Call notification**—if an extension dials 911, the Business-Connect™ system can be configured to dial a second extension, phone number, or group of extensions/numbers and play a voice message that repeats the 911 dialing extension number and the time 911 was dialed.

### Full Compliance with No Capital Expense

Summarizing, full compliance with H.R.582 is easily attained with the Cyclix Networks Business-Connect™ phone system and service. Further, the monthly re-occurring costs of the program competes with the plethora of hosted VoIP services now offered, while avoiding all of the technical shortfalls so often found with those services. At the same time, the business will benefit from the latest in communications technology, all at no capital expense, with Cyclix Networks.

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