

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6375

AS OF JANUARY 30, 1992

Brief Description: Requiring private branch exchanges to have the capability of forwarding automatic number identification for enhanced 911 purposes.

SPONSORS: Senator Thorsness

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Hearing Dates: January 30, 1992

BACKGROUND:

A "private branch exchange (PBX)" is a private telecommunications switching system located on a customer's premises and connected to a common group of incoming lines. This type of system provides service to a number of individual telephone sets. Many businesses and government entities use a private branch exchange within their premises. Examples include business parks, colleges, apartment buildings, hospitals, and similar facilities.

Enhanced 911 (E 911) is an emergency communications system that allows the answerer of the emergency call to determine the location where the call was initiated, even if the caller cannot speak. This occurs as a result of the automatic forwarding of certain information about the telephone number from which the call was made. The information about the number is stored in a data base. The citizens of Washington endorsed the concept of statewide E 911 when they approved Referendum 42 in November, 1991.

Some PBX equipment does not have the capability to forward this automatic number identification information to an emergency answering point. Instead of identifying the precise location of the caller, only the location of the switching equipment is identified. With this equipment frequently located apart from telephone set location (potentially even miles away), the ability to efficiently respond to an E 911 call could be compromised.

SUMMARY:

No person may install or cause to be installed private branch exchange (PBX) equipment to be connected with the facilities of a telecommunications company unless the equipment is capable of forwarding automatic number and location information to an emergency response answering location. Violators of this provision are guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

The Emergency Management Division of the Department of Community Development (DCD) is given primary authority to regulate these provisions, and may adopt rules, including fee authority, to implement this requirement.

The Emergency Management Division of DCD, in consultation with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC), is directed to adopt rules providing warning information to users of telephones serviced by PBX equipment that does not provide emergency response answering locations with needed identification information.

The state enhanced 911 coordinator is directed to develop a plan providing for the phase out, by December 31, 1998, of the use of all PBX equipment that does not have the capability of forwarding necessary identification information to emergency response answering locations.

The UTC is directed to develop a list of known PBX equipment, and may require local exchange telecommunications companies to provide relevant information. The UTC may regulate certain equipment located on customer premises, if it finds that such equipment should be regulated as it relates to the capability of providing enhanced emergency communication service.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 29, 1992