

150,000 EMERGENCY CALLS EVERY MONTH

Up to 150,000 emergency calls are made every month in Ireland, according to the latest figures relating to Ireland's emergency call answering service (ECAS), which is responsible for dispatching '112' and '999' calls to the relevant frontline emergency services.

Last year a total of 1.8 million calls were made to the Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS), which represents a 2.6% increase on 2016 levels. During Storm Ophelia, the figures show that over 9,000 calls were made to ECAS on one day alone – Tuesday 17 October 2017. The call volume peaked that day at 13.46 when 218 calls were received within the space of 15 minutes. The average speed of answer for a caller to ECAS was 0.71 seconds with more than 99% of calls answered within five seconds, putting ECAS among the best performing countries in the EU.

The ECAS establishes the location of the incident and confirms the emergency service being requested (Gardaí, Fire, Ambulance or Coast Guard and Air Traffic Control in emergencies involving aircraft).

The call or text is then transferred to the appropriate emergency service which then takes responsibility for the call and responds to the emergency. The ECAS operators continue to monitor the call until it has been accepted by the emergency service.

KEY FACTS REVIEWED

In 2017, ECAS received a total of 1,807,568 calls which represents a 2.6% increase in volume compared to 2016 levels. Prior to this, the volume of calls to ECAS decreased each year from 2010 to 2016 primarily due to a reduction in the number of calls caused by faulty telephone lines being received in ECAS.

There were also changes in the design of mobile handsets and the significant increase in the use of smartphones in Ireland, which make it more difficult to accidentally dial 112/999. Previous handset design had caused inadvertent calls to be put through to the ECAS.

Call volumes in 2017 have continued to remain at approximately 150,000 calls per month. Factors such as weather, flooding, holiday periods and the number of weekends in a month affect monthly call volumes in any given month. In this regard, there were two significant weather related incidents in 2017, Storm Doris and Storm Ophelia which significantly affected call volumes.

Of the three events, Storm Ophelia resulted in the most significant increase in call volumes and ECAS received 9,007 calls on 17 October 2017. During such adverse weather conditions the increased demand is directly due to an increase in

Annual Call Volume 2010 - 2017

Year	Volume of Calls
2010	3,230,263
2011	2,833,804
2012	2,802,406
2013	2,684,324
2014	2,149,445
2015	1,860,335
2016	1,761,166
2017	1,807,568

genuine normal calls, as well as an increase in "noisy" calls caused by faults on the PSTN network dialling 112. The call volume peaked that day at 13.46 when ECAS received 218 calls in 15 minutes. The volume of 'noisy' calls received on the day was five times greater than average.

The service has been available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year since it was launched in July 2010, with 100% availability over 2017. The average speed of answer for a caller to ECAS in 2017 was 0.71 seconds with more than 99% of calls answered within five seconds and this puts ECAS among the best performing countries in the European Union.

Calls are routed to the emergency services with details of the emergency and the location of the caller within an average of 7.57 seconds and in 2017 the ECAS achieved 99.6% call handling accuracy.



Ireland was one of the first countries in Europe to provide the '112' SMS service to access emergency services.

ECALL - SAVING LIVES



All new car models sold in Europe from April 2018 have the capacity to make eCall and the ECAS system was successfully upgraded in 2017 to enable it to receive and connect eCalls to the emergency services.

SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Two major initiatives to improve the ability of ECAS to provide additional location information of callers to the emergency services were completed in 2017:

Advanced Mobile Location (AML): This is a mobile phone technology to supplement current methods of locating mobile callers who contact the emergency services on 112 or 999.

It works by automatically finding a phone's co-ordinates and sending a text message to the call centre when '112' or '999' is dialled. The co-ordinates are immediately passed to the emergency services in responding and dispatching emergency personnel to callers in need across Ireland.

AML is a cost-effective technique which can provide a far greater degree of accuracy for the caller's location than was previously available. In most cases, this can be expected to be within 50 meters of the user's actual location where a GPS or Wi-Fi fix is established and in instances where a good GPS has been secured, within 10 meters.

Along with the use of Eircodes, which makes addresses easier to locate, the AML services further enhance precise definition of location to the services that need it most. ECAS started a pilot project in 2016 regarding the introduction of AML for Android smartphones and AML was formally launched in October 2017. AML supplements the existing location information provided to the emergency services, who will always ask the caller for location information regardless of where they receive a location from a mobile phone or not.



Advanced Mobile Location (AML) is a mobile phone technology to supplement current methods of locating mobile callers who contact the emergency services on 999 or 112.

by vehicle occupants or automatically as soon as an in-vehicle sensor detects an impact from a serious collision. When activated, eCall establishes a voice connection with ECAS.

Using the voice line, a Minimum Set of Data (MSD) is sent to the ECAS operator. The most important data is the accurate geo-location of the collision scene, knowing the exact location of the collision allows the emergency services to arrive much faster at the scene.

All new models of cars sold in Europe from April 2018 have the capacity to make eCall and the ECAS system was successfully upgraded in 2017 to enable it to receive and connect eCalls to the emergency services.



During Storm Ophelia, the figures show that over 9,000 calls were made to ECAS on one day alone – Tuesday 17 October 2017. It was regarded as the worst storm to affect Ireland in 50 years, and was also the easternmost Atlantic major hurricane on record.

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Ireland was one of the first countries in Europe to provide the '112' SMS service to access the emergency services. Since 2012 people in Ireland may use SMS text messaging to contact ECAS.

Although not exclusively for the disabled, the service does enable those who may be deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired to send SMS text messages to the ECAS. Another benefit of SMS is that it doesn't need the same quality of reception and may often function in areas of poor quality mobile coverage.

Recent enhancements in the service have enabled the processing of multi-part texts. This means that incoming texts which span more than one message are now presented in the ECAS as one single message.

This has resulted in significant improvements to the speed and accuracy with which such emergency texts can be processed and delivered to the Emergency Services. These 112 SMS texts are free of charge to the texter.

eCall: eCall is a '112' emergency call triggered either manually

The full ECAS report is available at: <https://bit.ly/2zgDXwE>