



Emergency Dialing and Alerts: Allworx System Software Provides Access to Three-Digit Emergency Numbers

Overview

In February of 2020 the implementation of two laws had a direct impact on Multi-Line Telephone Systems (MLTS) – Kari’s Law and section 506 of Ray Baum’s Act.

Now, in July of 2022 the FCC (Federal Communication Commission) will mandate the use of 988 to access the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Allworx® System Software provides the tools that resellers, service providers, and end users can use to comply with the requirements for three-digit emergency numbers. Additional emergency features are available for the Allworx® Connect™ premise servers, Connect™ Vx instances, System Software release 8.6 and higher, and the Allworx® Verge™ IP Phone Series. This paper provides a brief overview of the requirements and discusses how Allworx systems can help provide these vital services.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The FCC has adopted rules to establish 988 as the new, nationwide, three-digit phone number to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline where those in crisis can talk with counselors. These rules require that all telecommunications carriers, and all interconnected and one-way Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers direct all 988 calls to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by July 16, 2022.

More information can be found on the FCC website: <https://www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline>.

Kari’s Law and Ray Baum’s Act

The February 2020 Kari’s Law requires businesses with MLTS to allow users to directly dial an emergency number (e.g., 911), without having to dial a prefix (like 9 or 8) to reach an outside line, and to provide a mechanism for notification when a 911 call is made (e.g., to a front desk or security office).

Ray Baum’s Act (Section 506) requires phone system owners to ensure that an MLTS include a “dispatchable location” with emergency calls, regardless of the technological platform used, so that Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) receive the caller’s location automatically so that responders can be dispatched more quickly. A “dispatchable location” is defined as “the street address of the calling party, and additional information such as room number, floor number, or similar information necessary to adequately identify the location of the calling party.”

More information can be found on the FCC website: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-353961A1.pdf>.



The Allworx Tools

Our current Allworx System Software provides access to the Allworx System Administration web page for the settings that make it easy for resellers and users to comply with the requirements of each of these laws.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

As required by the FCC, users can initiate a call directly to 988 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix. The *Dial Plan* provides for the definition of *Auto Route Selection* to configure this functionality. *Auto Route Selection* does not apply any emergency-specific features to the route selection. The location of the call is not a "dispatchable location," nor is there any notification of these calls to specified handsets at the user's location.

Kari's Law and Ray Baum's Act

- As required in Kari's law, users can initiate a call directly to 911 (or other emergency number) without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix. The *Dial Plan* provides for the definition of the emergency number, and the default setting allows direct dialing to that number.

Note: This feature was first included in System Software release 7.4.

- An Emergency Caller ID can be assigned to each Allworx handset. This Telephone Number assigned as the Emergency Caller ID is sent to the local service provider that then searches for that number in their database to find a matching location. The service provider is then responsible for sending the call and location information to the appropriate PSAP. To comply with section 506 of Ray Baum's act, users need to work closely with their service providers to ensure that the Emergency Caller IDs provide the correct location information.

Note: This feature was first included in System Software release 7.2.

- The Emergency Alert feature sends audible and visual alerts to designated Allworx handsets immediately after an emergency call is made from any local or remote handset.
- Email and SMS (via an email to the SMS gateway) messages can be sent to notify specific users of the emergency calls that are placed. With System Software Release 8.6, location information is included in those emails and SMS messages. This location information can be added when creating the Emergency Caller IDs that can be assigned to Allworx handsets.

Setup Requirements

Detailed instructions for the setup requirements for each of these emergency dialing and alert features are included in the *Allworx System Administrator Guide* that can be found on the Allworx Portal (https://allworxportal.com/support_training/documentation.aspx).



Suicide Prevention Lifeline

As of the publication of this document (June 2022) Allworx system software does not contain native support for 3-digit dialing of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988), so administrators must configure various settings to allow users to connect to the lifeline using the 988-phone number.

Setting up your Allworx server to support National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 3-digit (988) dialing involves the following general steps:

1. Configure 7-digit dials that have a 988 exchange to use 10 digits.
2. Configure the system to place an external 988 call when 988 is dialed without the external access digit.
3. Configure the system to place an external 988 call when 988 is dialed along with the external access digit.

Notes:

- *In light of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline regulations, Allworx recommends maintaining the default external access digit (9) on all servers.*
- *Refer to the Selecting the Automatic Route section in the Allworx System Administrator Guide for detailed information.*

To configure the Allworx System Software to handle calls to 988

These procedures assume that the server is configured using the default external access digit (9) on all servers.

1. Configure 7-digit dials that have 988 exchange to use 10 digits.

If the site's home area includes 7-digit phone numbers with a 988 exchange (i.e., 988-xxxx), if callers dial only 7 digits for such calls, the carrier may not connect the call. To ensure that these calls are successfully connected, configure the system so that if a user dials the 7-digit phone number, the Allworx premise server or Connect Vx instance places the call using the full 10 digits, including the home area code.

Add the following *Automatic Route Selection* rule to the Dial Plan:

Leading Digits: **988**

Total Digits: **7**

Delete Leading Digits: **0**

Insert Leading Digits: **1** <home area code> (e.g., **1555**)

Append Trailing Digits:

Service Group: Select the appropriate group from the drop-down menu.

Test the rule by placing a call to a phone number with a 988 exchange by dialing a 7-digit number.



2. Configure the system to place an external 988 call when 988 is dialed WITHOUT the external access digit (i.e., **988**).

Add the following *Automatic Route Selection* rule to the Dial Plan:

Leading Digits: **88**

Total Digits: **2**

Delete Leading Digits: **0**

Insert Leading Digits: **9**

Append Trailing Digits:

Service Group: Select the appropriate group from the drop-down menu.

Test the rule by placing a call to the Suicide Prevention Lifeline by dialing 988. Inform the agent that the call is only a test of the phone system.

3. Configure the system to place an external 988 call when 988 is dialed WITH the external access digit (i.e., 9-988).

Add an *Automatic Route Selection* rule to the Dial Plan:

Leading Digits: **988**

Total Digits: **3**

Delete Leading Digits: **0**

Insert Leading Digits:

Append Trailing Digits:

Service Group: Select the appropriate group from the drop-down menu.

Test the rule by placing a call to a 988-phone number by dialing **9-988**. Inform the operator that the call is only a test of the phone system.

Alternate Procedures

If **9** cannot be configured as the external access digit, one of the following procedures may allow 3-digit 988 calls, depending upon other settings.

Procedure 1

These actions will provide 988 dialing if the *External Call* access digit is NOT 9, and the system IS NOT in *Extension Mode*.

1. Modify the *Internal Dial Plan* and set the leading digit for *Speed dial numbers* to **9**.
2. Create a *Public Contact* (or System Speed Dial) with a speed dial number of **988**.



3. For the Phone Number, enter <External Call access digit> **988** (e.g., if the *External Call access digit* is set to **8**, enter **8988**.)
4. Configure the system to place an external 988 call when 988 is dialed WITH the *External Call access digit* (as provided in step 3 of the procedure [To configure the Allworx System Software to handle calls to 988](#)).

Procedure 2

These actions will provide 988 dialing if the external access digit is NOT **9**, *Extension Length* is set to 3, and the system IS in *Extension Mode*.

1. Configure a *System Extension* with the number **988**.
2. For the call route, select *Dial Number* and enter <External Call access digit> **988** (e.g., If the *External Call access digit* is set to **8**, enter **8988**.)
3. Configure the system to place an external 988 call when 988 is dialed WITH the external access digit (as per the previous step).

Kari's Law and Ray Baum's Act

Note: Refer to the *Managing Emergency Number Rules and Emergency Alerts* sections in the *Allworx System Administrator Guide* for detailed information.

As you use the Allworx System Administration web page to define and manage the *Dial Plan*, *Emergency CID*, and *Service Group* settings, be aware of this important information relating to these requirements:

- The default emergency number is **911** and by default email and SMS (via an email to the SMS gateway) notifications are disabled.
- Remote sites within a Multi-Site Network should not be the only method available to place external calls. Loss of Internet connectivity between the local site and remote site (at either end) may disable the ability to place calls – including Emergency Calls.
- Allworx cannot guarantee the proper routing of Emergency Calls from remote Allworx phones or analog handsets attached to remote Allworx Px Expanders. It is important to work with your service provider to establish either local lines or numbers to the phone location, or off-net emergency notification numbers that can be assigned to the phone associated with the remote phone's location. If the remote phones are all at one site, the carrier can set up to direct emergency responses to that site. If phones are in multiple locations (that means remote from each other), then the carrier will have to provide a custom configuration for emergency responses to each location.
- When NANPA is enabled, the Allworx administrator cannot add, modify, or delete default rules; these include service rules, emergency rules, and 11-digit dialing rules.
- Setting Emergency Caller IDs to place emergency calls on a CO line does NOT work. The Emergency CID does not override the Caller ID of the CO line.



- Any Caller ID Number assigned to a handset must be routable to the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) responsible for servicing the physical location of the handset at the time the emergency call is placed.
- The Service Group configured on the Allworx server or Connect Vx instance used to place emergency calls using the Caller ID Number must always be capable of routing this number.
- It is the responsibility of the server administrator to verify that calls to the emergency number from handsets registered to the Allworx server or Connect Vx instance will route properly.
- Emergency rules supersede any phone functionality, except when the Allworx user is logged in to the phone administrative menu. In this rare instance, emergency dialing alerts will not be received on that phone.