

# How to Apply?

If your organization already participates in the Wireless Priority Service (WPS), identify your Point of Contact (POC). If you need assistance in identifying your POC, contact NCS by email at [wps@dhs.gov](mailto:wps@dhs.gov) or by phone at 866.NCS.CALL (866.627.2255) or 703.760.2255 and select Option #2.

To apply for WPS, visit the WPS website at [wps.ncs.gov](http://wps.ncs.gov) and select "Request WPS".

## Steps for requesting WPS:

- 1** The requesting organization must identify a POC and alternate who will manage the WPS account for the organization. We recommend that the POC for WPS be the same as the POC for the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), if applicable.
- 2** The POC selects potential users who meet the eligibility criteria and then requests WPS.
- 3** The NCS will review the request, approve or disapprove, and notify the POC.
- 4** If approved, the NCS will coordinate with the POC to activate WPS.

## For information on WPS contact:

### Department of Homeland Security National Communications System

Building 410 (Mail Stop 8500)  
245 Murray Lane  
Washington, DC 20528-8500

Tel: 866.NCS.CALL (866.627.2255) or  
703.760.2255

Normal hours of operation:  
Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 6PM Eastern

Email: [wps@dhs.gov](mailto:wps@dhs.gov)

Web: [wps.ncs.gov](http://wps.ncs.gov)

version 2.06



# WPS

*Wireless Priority Service*



**National  
Communications  
System**

# Wireless Priority Service

**National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP) telecommunications are critical in the event of natural and man-made disasters that threaten the security of the United States. WPS allows authorized NS/EP personnel to initiate calls during an emergency when cellular networks may be congested.**

## What is WPS?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a Report and Order on July 13, 2000, allowing cellular providers to offer wireless priority services to personnel at the Federal, state, and local levels to help meet the NS/EP needs of the Nation. This ruling establishes the regulatory, administrative, and operational framework that enables cellular providers to offer WPS to NS/EP personnel.

The FCC rules do not require cellular providers to offer WPS; it is a voluntary offering. Although the FCC maintains oversight of the WPS program, the Department of Homeland Security's National Communications System (NCS) is responsible for its day-to-day administration.

During emergencies, cellular providers can experience congestion in their networks, severely curtailing the ability to use cellular services. To facilitate completion of critical calls during these high usage events, WPS gives authorized NS/EP personnel priority cellular access before subscribers who do not have WPS. WPS will not preempt calls in progress and does not guarantee call completion.

## Why use WPS?

WPS gives authorized NS/EP personnel priority access to available cellular resources during emergency situations. In addition, WPS is complementary to, and can be used in conjunction with the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS). This ensures a high probability of call completion in both the landline and cellular portions of the Public Switched Network (PSN). WPS serves NS/EP needs while minimizing impact on the general public's access to the same cellular infrastructure.

## Who is Eligible?

Eligible users are key federal, state, local, and tribal government and critical infrastructure personnel who serve in NS/EP leadership positions. Criteria have been established to help identify critical NS/EP leadership functions and determine WPS eligibility.

## How to Make a Call?

WPS is invoked by dialing “\*272” prior to the destination number on cellular phones that are subscribed to the WPS feature.

## How Much Does it Cost?

Costs may vary by cellular carrier, but they are limited to a maximum \$10 one-time activation fee, a \$4.50 per-month service fee, and \$ .75 per minute for WPS (\*272) calls. WPS charges are in addition to the basic calling plan.

## Eligibility Criteria

- A Executive Leadership and Policy Makers**  
Individuals in executive leadership and policy making roles. Examples include the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, selected military leaders, state governors and lieutenant governors, members of Congress, cabinet level officials, mayors and county officials, and a minimum number of senior support staff.
- B Disaster Response/Military Command Control**  
Individuals key to managing the initial response to an emergency at the local, state, regional, and Federal levels as well as personnel essential to continuity of government and national security functions. Examples include Federal and state emergency operations center coordinators.
- C Public Health, Safety, and Law Enforcement Command**  
Individuals who direct operations critical to life, property, and maintenance of law & order immediately following an event. Examples include Federal, state, and local police, fire, and emergency service leadership; search & rescue team leaders; and emergency communications coordinators.
- D Public Services/Utilities and Public Welfare**  
Individuals responsible for managing not only public works and utility infrastructure damage assessment and restoration efforts, but also transportation services for emergency response activities. Examples include US Army Corps of engineers; telecommunications, power, water, and sewage utilities; and transportation leadership.
- E Disaster Recovery**  
Personnel responsible for managing recovery operations after the initial response has been accomplished. Examples include medical recovery operations and detailed damage assessment leadership; disaster shelter coordination & management; and critical Disaster Field Office support personnel.