

Non Initialized cellular phones and cellular phones known as Trac Phones, where clients purchase minutes and download them to a cellular phone are plaguing 911 centers.

Here in Saline County a pair of children used their parents old cellular phones to repeatedly call 911 for several days. The parents had upgraded their cellular phones and gave the children their old phones, complete with battery, for play. The children called 911 for days not saying a word, but would hang up and dial again. The calls finally stopped once the parents caught them, but prior to the parents catching the children, the children had become brave and began to curse the telecommunicators, who were doing their job. In all approximately 240 911 calls were received from the pair of children.

The job of a 911 telecommunicator can be stressful enough, without the prank 911 calls. It is unknown how many of these calls actually delayed emergency response from callers of a true emergency.

Previously a stolen phone was used to call in bomb threats to the communications center. The phone had been deactivated by the original owner, but still had the ability to call 911. Once again a young adult was found to be making the prank calls.

Each 911 agency has similar stories, and in ten years at this 911 center I have even more. The premise of allowing old cellular phones call 911 is a good thought. However, without the ability to call the phone back or trace the phone, the ability is often used for more harm than good. In my ten years at this 911 center, I cannot recall any events of where an old cellular phone was used in an emergency.

Either the ability to trace all phones must be accomplished, or once the phones are upgraded, disabled or turned off, the ability to call 911 must be disabled.

The amount of time used to trace phones, find owners, receive the calls and the emotional strain is very difficult to measure. The

act of tracing a cell phone is no small miracle as each cell phone provider, requires a high magnitude of first finding who to call, followed by numerous questions and time for the provider to search the database. In some trace attempts a full day may be exploited before an answer of who the phone belongs to or belonged to formerly.

Please examine the guidelines to suspend the ability for non-initialized or Trac phones to dial 911.