

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

17th Congress

1st Regular Session

4016

House Bill _____



Introduced by HON. BAYANI F. FERNANDO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

While the concept of a single national emergency hotline is laudable, its efficacy will be more than doubled if such concept is duplicated at the local level.

Having local emergency hotlines ensures that in the event that there is need for fire, medical, police or rescue assistance, the first responders such as the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection, local hospitals, Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the Barangay, etc., will act in a timely, efficient and effective manner as all coordination efforts are confined at a local level.

A call to our 911 national emergency hotline will still be referred to the local authorities anyway, this proposal eliminates at least one level of bureaucracy as far as coordinating with the first responders is concerned.

A local emergency hotline also guarantees that the ones receiving the calls and coordinates the response are people who are the primary responders and already familiar with the lay of the land and with the people within the locality, which is an advantage when responding to emergencies.

A good model is the 161 of Marikina City. However, it has been the experience of the City that it took them a long time to acquire this number and is limited to one carrier only. Contacting this number requires adding a prefix of 02 when dialing which added to the confusion. With this legislation, these hindrances will be eliminated and the telcos will be obliged to take prompt action.

There is an essential need for the government to deliver immediate emergency services in order to secure life and property at all times, thus, the passage of this measure is earnestly requested.


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**AN ACT REQUIRING TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES TO
PROVIDE LOCAL EMERGENCY HOTLINE NUMBERS TO ALL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS**

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the Emergency Hotline for LGUs Act of 2016.

Section 2. Institutionalizing Local Emergency Hotlines. – All telecommunications companies, providing landline, VOIP, wireless or mobile communication services, are hereby required to provide a common 3 or 4 digit hotline number to serve as a local emergency hotline within 90 days upon request of a Local Government Unit covered under their service area. In this instance, a local government unit shall refer only to a city or a municipality.

Section 3. LGU Role. – The LGU may establish a call center to service all calls to the emergency hotline assigned to the LGU. The call center shall then coordinate with the concerned responders within the LGU such as the Philippine National Police, Department of Health- operated hospitals, Bureau of Fire Protection, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and other government and non-government agencies / organizations that may be needed to respond to the emergency at hand.

Section 4. Hotline Limitations. – The hotline numbers provided shall be “call only” hotlines and must be reachable via cellular phone or landline of any telecommunications provider, without the need for a prefix or area code. All calls to the emergency hotline shall be charged a reasonable rate by the service provider chargeable against the account of the caller. This is to discourage prank calls.

Section 5. Penalties for Prank Calls. – Any person found to have made a prank call, false report or complaint, misrepresentation of facts in accessing the local emergency hotline shall be subject to the following penalties:

1. 1st Offense – Five Thousand Peso Fine
2. 2nd Offense – Ten Thousand Peso Fine and Suspension of the account of the caller

3. 3rd Offense – Twenty Five Thousand Peso Fine, Termination of the account of the caller and imprisonment of 15 – 30 days
4. 4th and Succeeding Offenses – Fifty Thousand Peso Fine, Termination of the account of the caller and blacklisting of said caller from securing an account from all telecommunications companies, imprisonment of 30 – 180 days at the discretion of the court.

Section 6. Exemption from Anti-Wiretapping Act. - All calls made to the assigned emergency hotline constitutes as a waiver by the caller of the protection granted under Republic Act 4200 or the Anti-Wiretapping Act and the recording of the call shall be available as evidence against the caller.

Further, any telecommunications company may be compelled through a subpoena duces tecum issued by a duly authorized government agency to disclose the name, location, among other details of the owner or subscriber of the telephone line where any act contrary to the provisions of the preceding section was established to have originated.

Section 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Department of Information and Communications Technology and the National Telecommunications Commission shall formulate and issue appropriate implementing rules and regulations necessary within 90 days after the passage of this Act for the efficient and effective implementation of all provisions of this Act.

Section 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, memorandum circulars inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 8. Effectivity. – This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.