



National Electronic Security Alliance

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Representing electronic security, fire and integrated systems professionals

NESA Position Paper

Voice over Internet Can Limit Access to Emergency Services

Voice over Internet promises many benefits to consumers, mostly lower prices. But few providers or consumers are aware that relying on VoIP may make it impossible to contact emergency services.

According a Houston Chronicle of 02/24/05, a family was unable to use 911 to contact police during a home invasion during which a couple was shot. Not all VoIP providers include a method for contacting 911 when providing telephone service.

The digital technology utilized to enable VoIP does not currently enable signals to be reliably sent to services which monitor burglar and fire alarms. Unless consumers retain a separate phone service, they will not be protected during these emergencies. There are more than 30 million alarms now in service, protecting homeowners and businesses of all types, including utilities, financial institutions, and others.

The National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA) understands that VoIP is a developing technology that may prove efficient and cost-effective. But we believe that the consumer should be fully informed about the possible consequences of eliminating land-line services.

As the technology advances, Congress should require providers to seek technological solutions that will enable both public and private emergency services to be reached. VoIP should be made backward-compatible with the 30 million alarms now in service. The public safety demands it.

Established on December 17, 2004, the National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA) is a federation of state associations established to serve and promote the electronic systems industry at the direction of, and through its affiliated state associations. NESA represents electronic security, fire, access control, CCTV and integrated systems professionals in its state associations.