

## CELLULAR EMERGENCY INFORMATION \*999

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In 1989, the Illinois Department of Transportation conceived the concept of a Cellular Emergency Information System. Co-funded by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority since 1992, it has become a major component of the region's incident reporting and notification system. In a typical year, the \*999 Cellular Express Line serving the Chicagoland area, receives over 25,000 incoming calls per month with more than 95% of the calls being classified as "Good Samaritan."

The \*999 Cellular Express Line provided *ADVANCE* with anecdotal incident information on expressways and arterials. However, this information was not continuous and required manual entry of the data. In an effort to automate the procedures at the \*999 facility, a computerized database system for entering and recording \*999 incident information was developed and implemented in 1996. The operations at \*999 use the computerized system to record incoming call information in real-time.

The system allows the operator to classify incidents according to their type (i.e., accident, car fire, pedestrian on roadway, etc). For quicker operator action, most of the input fields contain a limited set of possible entries that can be made. The system also provides a means to determine if a new call is reporting a previously entered incident. If in question, the operator can view a list that provides information on incidents that have been previously entered. This feature eases the operator workload and reduces the number of duplicate calls that the responding agencies need to answer.

A critical element of the updated \*999 Incident Processing System is the electronic connection which provides the real-time incident information to the Gateway Corridor Transportation Information Center (G-TIC). Through this connection, up-to-the-minute incident information (incident type, street, cross street, address, time, details) is sent to the G-TIC. The transfer of incident information is transparent to the operation at the \*999 facility and is accomplished with a standard modem connection via a telephone line.

At the G-TIC, incidents are automatically entered into the database without the need to have an operator intervene. The G-TIC filters out incidents that are not on expressway, tollways or major arterial routes. Once incident information is entered into the database, it is available for display by the operator and on the web pages. The \*999 software is a prototype which can be used to add other cellular-based systems as a data input to the G-TIC.

Two major benefits are realized through the automation of the \*999 cellular emergency reporting system. First, the \*999 operators are more efficient in their recording of incident information and contacting the proper response agencies. Second, with the connection to the G-TIC, the information can be disseminated to a larger number of response agencies which allow more agencies to be informed in a timely fashion.