Accessible Emergency Communication via Relay Services

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Table of content:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of the operations of Relay Services across various EU countries, with a particular emphasis on Video Relay Services (VRS). It highlights relevant technical standards and regulations governing these services, aiming to raise awareness of how these frameworks will shape the provisioning of relay services in Europe, especially as countries transition to Next Generation technologies. The document also examines the interaction between Relay Services and Emergency Services, focusing on how established technical and operational standards will impact accessibility to Emergency Services in the coming years

The purpose of this document is to

- Define Relay Services and their role in enabling communication for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals.
- Highlight disparities in legal, technical, and operational frameworks across the EU.
- Explore challenges in connecting Relay Service users to emergency services.
- Identify issues like delays, inconsistent standards, and security concerns.
- Recommend harmonised standards, cross-border functionality, and better training for emergency responders.

1 | Definition of Relay Services

Telecom Relay Services (TRS) are typically call centre services that enable two-way communication between people who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (D, DB, HH) with people who are hearing. Since D, DB, HH and hearing people require different modes of communication (for example text, sign language or voice), Relay Services provide conversion between those modes of communication, normally done by a human operator. Reference to relay services can be found at the European Electronic Communication code (EECC 2018/1972) .

There are different types of Relay Services, for instance:

Video Relay Services

Video Relay Services enable Deaf individuals who use sign language to communicate with hearing individuals through a sign language interpreter. For example:

- Emma, who is Deaf and uses sign language, needs to contact her doctor. She calls the doctor's office using a video relay service, and a sign language interpreter answers. The interpreter calls Emma's doctor, and a three-party call is established with video between Emma and the interpreter, and voice between the interpreter and the doctor. Emma signs her message to the interpreter, who then verbally relays it to the doctor. The doctor's response is spoken back to the interpreter, who signs the message to Emma in real-time, facilitating seamless communication.

Text Relay Services

Text Relay Services cater to those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or have speech impairments and prefer text-based communication. Calls are facilitated by a relay agent who types out spoken words in real-time or uses automatic speech recognition to generate text. For instance:

- David, who became Deaf later in life, prefers to communicate using his own voice and receiving text back. He calls his bank using a text relay service. A call agent joins the call and transcribes the bank representative's spoken words into real-time text. David reads the text and provides his response using his own voice.

Speech-to-Speech Relay (STS)

Speech-to-Speech Relay is intended for individuals with speech impairments. A trained relay agent listens and rephrases the caller's speech for clarity when needed, ensuring effective communication. For example:

- Sarah, who has a speech impairment, needs to make an appointment with her dentist. Using speech-to-speech relay, a call agent assists her in communicating clearly. Sarah

[1] EECC 2018/1972, §227

- speaks, and the agent helps rephrase her words for clarity when needed, ensuring that her conversation with the dentist is smooth and understood.

2 | Relay Services in Europe

A number European countries have offered relay services since the 1980s such as Text-based Relay services between textphones and voice telephones in Denmark, Finland[2], The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom. A number of other countries including the Czech Republic and Spain launched relay services in the 1990s. Some other countries are currently in the process of implementing new legislation and setting up relay services, such as Slovakia, Lithuania and Estonia.

The availability of Text Relay Services has created a tradition of telephone culture in the Deaf community in those countries, where Deaf people started to take their phone to make calls[3], book appointments, or simply order a pizza.

As internet access via broadband became increasingly prevalent in the early 2000s, Video Relay Services began to emerge. This technological advancement coincided with shifts in communication patterns within the Deaf community. With the proliferation of end-user devices like laptops and smartphones, videocalls became more accessible and widely used, enabling the Deaf community to make point-to-point calls using sign language.

Sweden pioneered the delivery of Video Relay Services in the early 2000, but more countries were quick to adopt, such as Norway, Germany, and the UK. As more services became available, ETSI published its first technical document describing Relay Services and the technology being used.[4]

The availability of Relay Services across Europe varies significantly, ranging from very limited or non-existent services in many countries to a handful of member states offering widely accessible 24/7 services.

EECC Article 85(4) specifies that "*Member States shall ensure, in light of national conditions, that support is provided, as appropriate, to consumers with disabilities, and that other specific measures are taken, where appropriate, with a view to ensuring that related terminal equipment, and specific equipment and specific services that enhance equivalent access, including where necessary total conversation services and relay services, are available and affordable*."[5]

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[2] Finland is planning to close its Text Relay Service in November 2024, with reference to the availability of Real-Time Text (RTT) provided by the Mobile Network Operators.

[3] Hearing people have a tradition of using a voice telephone. Deaf people, when referring to "phone" used textphones and nowadays over the top (OTT) apps usually made available by the national relay service.

[4] ETSI ES 202 975 https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_es/202900_202999/202975/01.02.01_60/es_202975v010201p.pdf and ETSI TR 102 974 https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_tr/102900_102999/102974/01.01.01_60/tr_102974v010101p.pdf

[5] EECC Article 85, Provision of affordable universal service, §4

2.1 Legal and Technical Requirements

At present, there are no unified legal and technical requirements within the EU mandating common minimum standards and functional requirements for relay services. Consequently, a notable disparity exists in the provision of these services across EU member states. Each member state operates under its distinct legal framework, funding mechanisms, and technical specifications, resulting in inconsistencies throughout the EU.

This divergence impacts crucial aspects including:

- **Availability**: This includes registration requirements, quality of service (including queue times), and access to necessary technical equipment for individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing.

- **Opening hours:** While only a few countries offer 24/7 services, most countries provide limited hours for Video Relay and may only offer Text Relay round the clock. This limitation affects the ability to connect emergency calls using Total Conversation and sign language via Relay Services.

- **Financial support:** Member States finance relay services differently, often with limited budgets or time frames. This impacts service availability, economic viability of call centres, the number of call operators (interpreters, text relay agents), technical support availability, and outreach to the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities. Moreover, registration is required, and the provision of services is limited to nationals in their countries – for instance, only French citizens who live in France can use French Relay Services, only Dutch citizens living in the Netherlands can use the Dutch Relay Services.

The availability of different ways of communication may vary depending on the country:

- **Text standards:** Text is used by Text Relay Service. Some countries are using basic chat, whereas in other countries Real-Time Text (RTT) has been deployed. Real-time text (RTT) is a communication method that enables the instant transmission of text as it is being typed. This allows the recipient to read the message in real-time, without the need to wait for the sender to complete the entire message before it is delivered.[6]

- **Total conversation:** Total conversation is a communication standard that enables individuals in two or more locations to engage in real-time interactions through a combination of synchronised audio, video, and text modalities.[7] It is available in some countries, but not in others.

[6] For further reference, a more detailed information about Real-Time Text is available in Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real-time_text

[7] The standard, as defined in ITU-T recommendation F: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/studygroups/com16/accessibility/Pages/conversation.aspx

The lack of widely adopted standards is currently a challenge.

- **Harmonized technology and standards**: The technical standards for Relay Services in Europe date back to 2009, when mobile internet was still unstable, data costs were prohibitively high and smartphone penetration remained low . Only a few member states require the use of internationally accepted standards, such as Real-Time Text (RTT) according to RFC 4103, Total Conversation, and SIP according to RFC 3261. Therefore, these standards are not widely adopted or enforced.[8]

3 | How Relay Services interact with PSAPs

In several countries, regulatory bodies require relay service providers to prioritize and manage emergency calls. The picture below the emergency call flow looks like when calls are made via Relay Services to Emergency Services.

End-user domain: Callers may utilize advanced telecommunication methods, including but not limited to Real-Time Text (RTT) , adaptive equipment, wireless devices, videophones, computers, tablets, and software applications. Some callers may lack audio capabilities on their devices, which means that the relay agent and Call Taker at the 112 service may not be able to rely on background noises to assist during the emergency call.

TPS Relay Services: Relay Services facilitate voice calls to Emergency Services, serving as intermediaries for callers facing communication challenges and Emergency Services. Initially, incoming calls are received by the Relay Services, where callers may utilize a combination of video, voice, and text. However, when the relay agent contacts the call taker at the 112 services, the communication is restricted to voice only.

[8] Further information about technical standards is available in the following document published by EENA: Implementation of RTT and Total Conversation in Europe (https://eena.org/wp-content/uploads/RTT-and-TC-Implementation-in-Europe-.pdf)

3.1 Examples of interaction between Relay Services and PSAPs

PSAP: Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) will receive relay service-initiated emergency calls as voice calls. Since the communication between the relay agent and the call taker is typically limited to voice, the relay agent must verbally describe the text or sign language relayed by the caller. The PSAP's call-taker will not be able to hear directly the background noises. This can result in potential information loss or miscommunication, especially in high-stress situations. Moreover, location information is not widely available nor required for calls made via Relay Services.[9]

The lack of harmonized technology, standards and legislative framework can significantly impact the requirements for roaming and geolocation across member states when individuals need access to sign language to make an emergency call. Additionally, it may affect the confidence of individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in their ability to make emergency calls while traveling across different member states in the EU.

During 2023, EENA conducted a series of workshops on the role of Third-Party Service Providers (TPSPs) in emergency communications and their integration with Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) across Europe. Workstream #2 describes access to emergency services for end-users with disabilities via Relay Services. The report was published in January 2024, and it contains examples of the interactions between Relay Services and Emergency Services in Sweden and in the Netherlands.[10]

3.1.1 Sweden

In Sweden, people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing or with speech impairments have access to 112 through relay services, including video relay, text relay, and speech-to-speech relay. The services are available 24/7, so that members of these communities can call emergency services via the relay services at any time of the day. Location information is not available. The relay service connects the call to 112 and the call taker at the 112 services leads the call.

The Swedish Video Relay Service (VRS), known as Bildtelefoni (Video Telephony), is operated by Evantia under the procurement of the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS).

This nationwide VRS service supports both primary users (those who primarily communicate in sign language) and secondary users (hearing individuals who communicate with deaf individuals via sign language). In 2022, the VRS handled approximately 320,000 relay calls, 518 of which were directed to emergency services. Additionally, the VRS facilitated non-emergency calls to healthcare and police. Nearly 40% of these calls were made using a freely available service app.

There is a requirement in Sweden for relay service providers to have an agreement with SOS Alarm, the organisation operating the PSAPs. This is to ensure that all calls are handled in a safe and methodical way for primary users and call takers. When an end-user is calling emergency services, they end up in a priority queue at the relay service which is then relayed to the PSAP.

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[9] The Netherlands is currently requiring that location information be available for emergency calls via the relay service. Further information under point 4.2, below.

[10] https://eena.org/wp-content/uploads/2024_01_30_TPSP_Final_Report_FINAL.pdf

3.1.2. The Netherlands

Text and Video Relay Services are available in the Netherlands. The service processes an average of 22,000 video calls and 20,000 text calls each year. Users can access the service through a dedicated app that includes a direct text connection option for emergency calls to 112. This feature synchronizes voice and text channels, allowing the caller to speak while the agent communicates via text.

Of the roughly 600 emergency calls made annually, approximately 98% are initiated directly through the app, with the remaining calls utilizing video relay services for sign language interpretation.

The service also offers remote interpretation for added convenience. Pre-registration is required, necessitating the provision of an address for location identification. This information, along with device location data (collected with user consent when using the app), ensures accurate caller localization. The ability to access device location has been available since 2019 for RTT and since 2023 for Total Conversation. One of the key technical features is prioritizing video calls, ensuring that the first available agent promptly responds to incoming video calls.

3.1.3 The United Kingdom

999BSL is a service set up in the United Kingdom that provides access by Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) to Emergency Services (999). The service requirements and its implementation as described in an EENA blog entitled "A Case Study of Accessibility: 999BSL".[11] The service is available via an app or via the web. No registration is required, and the call is connected to the emergency services via the Video Relay Service.[12] Location information is available and call back from the emergency services is possible even to non-registered users.

3.1.4 Australia

In Australia, it also possible to make emergency calls via the relay service, National Relay Service (NRS) using textphones (TTY) over the fixed line, chat, SMS, captions telephony, Speech-to-Speech Relay.[13] Australia does not recognize Real-Time Text (RTT) as a standard for text communication over the Internet, nor RTT is available natively on the handsets. Legislation still mandates that textphones (TTY) be available and it is connected via the country's Integrated Digital Network.[14]

Although Video Relay is available in Australia, it uses Skype and the NRS does not recommend Skype to be used for emergency calls. Therefore, the recommendation is to use analogue textphones, chat, SMS or captions.

During 2022-23, there were an average of 45 calls to the emergency services per month, with an average length of around 10 minutes per call.

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[11] https://eena.org/blog/a-case-study-of-accessibility-999bsl/

[12] https://999bsl.co.uk

[13] Call procedures and guidelines are provided in the service's website: https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/how-to-make-an-emergency-call-using-the-nrs

[14] Accessible Telecommunications using the Fixed Line Network in Australia: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/projects/towards-accessible-telecommunications-people-disabilities-1

All users have to register for the service, unless they call using a textphone (TTY). The Relay Service functions as a first respondent and identifies the caller's location and the emergency service needed. Text calls to the emergency services are made as follows:

- Textphones users dial 000 to reach the relay services and then ask for ambulance, police or fire department. Since it is an anologue call via the telephone network, location information is available. The Relay Service servers as a first respondent and connects the call to the desired service to the nearest emergency service provider in area where the caller is situated.

- Chat NRS Chat functions like an online instant messaging service. To place the call, users dial 000 from their app or press a red button (000). Then users type their part of the conversation on a computer, tablet, or smartphone, and then read the other person's responses as text provided by a Relay Officer. The Relay Officer connects the call to the emergency services. Location information is not available and callers have to say where they are calling from.

- SMS to the relay service. Users send a SMS to a long number, and in the first message they are asked to provide the following information: 000; fire, police or ambulance; name and location; brief explanation of the emergency; GA at the end of the message.

3.1.5 114 Emergency Service in France

France offers a special emergency number 114 for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing or with speech impairments. The service is available 24/7 and can be reached using the 114 app for smartphones, SMS (text) or via the web. Call takers can sign and type text directly to the caller, therefore there is no relay service involved. The caller explains the emergency situation to the 114-call taker, who then connects to the service needed in the caller's location (fire department, police or ambulance).[15]

3.2. Limitations when using Relay Services to make emergency calls

Individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing may prefer to use a Relay Service to make an emergency call. However, these calls may take a bit longer to ensure that information is accurately relayed. Call Takers at the Emergency services might experience brief pauses before receiving the relayed messages. For instance, when using a Video Interpreter through VRS, there may be a slight delay as the interpreter translates between sign language and spoken language during the call.

Three critical challenges have been identified when emergency calls are placed via a Relay Service and then connected to the Emergency Services. These challenges include:

[15] More information about 114 in France: *https://www.info.urgence114.fr/prehome/*

3.2.1 Registration requirement

Signing up for relay services is typically necessary, although the registration process can vary depending on the service provider and country. Most video relay services require that the user registers and then downloads an app, while other services may be available without a registration and via a web application.

3.2.2 Time delay in connecting calls via a third-party

There exists a disparity in the established standards for response times between Emergency Services and Relay Services. Emergency calls typically have stringent Service Level Agreement (SLA) requirements for response times, often ranging from 4 to 10 seconds. However, Relay Services operate under different SLA requirements, with response times often extending to 1 minute or even several minutes in certain countries or at night time. This could result in further delays, especially during periods of low call volumes. Moreover, Relay Services may or may not operate around the clock, which means that users cannot rely on the availability of relay services to connect their calls to Emergency Services.

As a result, when a Deaf person makes a call through relay services, the response time is significantly longer compared to a call made by a hearing person. Additionally, in rare instances where location information is transmitted to the Emergency Services, the delay in identifying and/or validating the call location further extends the response time.

3.2.3 Call recording

When the relay agent connects with the call taker at the 112 services, the communication is limited to voice only, even if the user's call is video-based (sign language) or uses Real-Time Text (RTT).

Consequently, the call recorded at the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) will solely capture voice communication between the relay agent and the call taker. The original conversation from the Deaf caller, which may include video or text elements, will not be available in the recording, except in very few cases, such as in the United Kingdom.[16]

3.2.4. Call handling guidelines

In the investigation of call handling guidelines for calls between Relay and Emergency Services, specifically in cases where calls originate from Deaf individuals that use sign language, comprehensive recommendations or guidelines have not been identified at the European level. National guidelines, if existing, appear to be not readily accessible. This underscores the need for heightened attention from service providers in addressing this aspect of emergency response.

In the interim, reference to guidelines provided by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) could offer valuable insights.

- Make sure the relay service answers emergency calls first, before other calls that are not emergencies.

[16] 999BSL in the United Kingdom provides call recording between the Deaf caller and the relay agent. The recording is stored by the Relay Service on behalf of the Emergency Services.

- When an emergency call starts, ask the caller for their name and where they are, unless we already know their location. If the caller says they're not where they usually are, the relay agent should: (1) ask where they are, and (b) connect to the Emergency Service.
- Only collect information that's needed for emergency help.
- Share the caller's address, the name of the relay service, and the relay agent's ID or name with the call taker.
- Use a standard message when starting a call, like: "This is a Video Relay emergency call; I am interpreter #ID."
- If a Deaf caller stops responding during the call, the relay agent can also tell the call taker any other important details they noticed.
- Relay agents should in fact be prepared to provide the following information: where the emergency is, what's happening, and a call back number.

NENA describes in depth the requirements and regulation for accessing Emergency Services via Relay Services in a document rereferred earlier, entitled "NENA Video Relay Service & IP Relay Service PSAP Interaction Information Document"[17]. The document was originally published in 2015. As new access technologies and regulation have been implemented since then, the document is currently being revised and updated. A new version should be available during 2024.

3.2.5 Security Impact

To understand the security impact between calls from relay services to Emergency Services, we need to consider the diverse methods of communication involved. Calls to Relay Services often utilize Over the Top (OTT) applications and traverse the public internet. It's important to note that not all of these services are encrypted, presenting potential vulnerabilities in the transmission of sensitive information. Additionally, the requirement for encryption differs from country to country, further complicating the security landscape. This variation in encryption standards and practices raises concerns about the confidentiality and integrity of the data exchanged during relayed emergency calls.

3.2.6 Roaming

From 1 June 2023, amended EU regulations on roaming on public mobile communications network in the European Union[18] ensure that mobile operators must send automatic messages to their customers traveling abroad to inform them, in addition to information about the single number 112, about the available alternative means of reaching emergency services, such as through Real-Time Text or apps. Those citizens who are not able to make voice calls may use these alternative means.

There are potential challenges when using Relay Services while roaming in the EU, but they are more related to technical and operational factors rather than direct legal conflicts with roaming requirements.

[17] NENA Video Relay Service & IP Relay Service PSAP Interaction Information Document, NENA-INF-013.2-2015
[18] EU Regulation 2022/612, Article 15 §2

3.2.7 Location data

For location data in emergency communications, the EECC requires that caller location information be provided to emergency services during an emergency call, both for fixed and mobile communication.[19] The information should be accurate and reliable, and provided free of charge to the authority handling the emergency.

When a connection to 112 is made via a Relay Service, there can be several conflicts related to the accuracy and transmission of location data, for instance:

Location data loss or alteration: As Relay Service providers connect the call to 112, the original caller's location data may not be transmitted to PSAP.
Standards compliance issues: The Relay Services may not support the same protocols for transmitting location data, such as AML.

3.2.8 Routing emergency calls to the most appropriate PSAP

Emergency calls should be routed to the most appropriate PSAP, regardless of the technology used.[20] Relay services face several challenges in this context, for instance: availability of accurate location information of the caller, or missing information on how to contact the PSAP.

4 | Harmonizing accessibility and the future of relay services in emergency communications

As discussed in previous sections, there is no unified approach across the EU establishing common technical standards or functional requirements for relay services, which results in significant disparities between member states.

Key challenges remain to address limitations in service provision and availability, including the need for greater harmonization in location information, roaming, and cross-border accessibility for emergency communications via relay services. The ongoing transition to Next Generation technologies offers both opportunities and challenges for ensuring consistent, accessible emergency communications across the EU.

The future of EU relay services will require sustained collaboration among member states, emergency services, and technology providers to close existing gaps and ensure universal, real-time access to emergency services.

[19] EECC 2018/1972, Article 109 §6
[20] EECC 2018/1972, Article 109 §2

4.1 Accessibility to Emergency Communications

Ensuring that emergency communications are accessible to individuals with diverse capabilities involves a series of considerations: communication modality (voice, text, video) and language used (sign language, spoken language), user interface (Native RTT, Total Conversation equipment) and routing to the most appropriate PSAP.

The use of Total Conversation plays a key role in the accessibility of Emergency Services. Accessibility and interoperability of emergency communications and for the answering of emergency communications by the public safety answering point (PSAPs) has been recently updated by ETSI EMTEL.[21] This Technical Specification is an important resource, providing essential guidance on the implementation of Total Conversation communication within emergency communication systems.

4.2 Total Conversation in Emergency Services

Many aspects of accessible emergency communication are described in ETSI TS 101 470[22], which specifies the total conversation access to emergency communications. The use of media for different purposes is described, and implementations in various technical environments are specified.

5. Conclusions and recommendations for future work

Integrating RTT (Real-Time Text) and Total Conversation into Emergency Services is a significant advancement towards enhancing accessibility. By enabling these communication modalities, vital communication challenges for individuals with hearing or speech impairments are addressed, as well as for everyone who needs to contact 112 in situations where voice communication is not possible or impractical. This advancement ensures that emergency responders receive timely and accurate information, including geopositioning, improved call routing and call back when necessary.

Text and Video Relay Services will remain used by people who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (D, DB, HH) . The continued relevance of Video Relay Services is evident in initiatives like 999BSL in the UK, which facilitates emergency calls via British Sign Language (BSL). The success of 999BSL, averaging 1700 calls to Emergency Services every month, underscores the importance of enabling emergency communication through sign language. This approach ensures that individuals who rely on sign language can effectively convey critical information during emergencies, improving the overall accessibility and responsiveness of Emergency Services.

As described in previous sections, there is no harmonized technical requirements for Relay Services in Europe. ETSI EN 301 549 (Accessibility Requirements for ICT Products and Services)[23] is currently being updated and will include further specifications regarding the procurement of Relay Services.

[21] *https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_ts/103900_103999/103919/01.01.01_60/ts_103919v010101p.pdf*
[22] *https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_ts/101400_101499/101470/01.01.01_60/ts_101470v010101p.pdf*
[23] *https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_en/301500_301599/301549/03.02.01_60/en_301549v030201p.pdf*

The analysis in this document reveals an area in EU legislation that could benefit from further development, particularly in the integration of Relay Services with Emergency Services. To ensure equitable access to emergency communication for all citizens, including those who are users of relay services (e.g. Deaf and DeafBlind)It is important to consider the creation of harmonized service guidelines and technical specifications.

Four key aspects need further consideration:

1. Implementation of Established Standards: It is important that newly developed technical standards, are implemented by member states. This is to ensure interoperability among various Emergency Services networks and providers to accommodate Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing citizens.

2. Relay Services in a Roaming Context: When EU citizens travel abroad and need to contact emergency services via relay services, they may encounter difficulties due to various reasons. Relay services are typically specific to each country and might not be available across borders. Moreover, emergency calls via relay services may not be routed correctly in a foreign country, leading to potential delays or communication issues.

3. Accessibility Features: Ensure that individuals have access to technology and applications that are designed with accessibility features in mind, including support for screen readers, text-to-speech, and other assistive technologies. This will help ensure that individuals with disabilities can effectively communicate.

4. Training and Education: Provide training and education to call takers on how to effectively handle emergency calls from individuals who rely on sign language and RTT. This includes providing guidance on how to interact with sign language interpreters, communicate via RTT, and provide appropriate assistance to callers with accessibility needs.

The definition of clear guidelines and technical standards is key to enhance accessibility, improve emergency response, and safeguard the well-being of all individuals, regardless of their communication needs or circumstances.