



City of Key West Staff Report NR: 004-2026

Subject: Public Safety – 911 Emergency Communications

Bill Number: HB 1427 (2026)

Effective Date: Upon becoming law (implementation deadlines through January 1, 2029)

Reference Document: HB 1427

I. BILL SUMMARY

Florida House Bill 1427 (HB 1427) proposes a comprehensive restructuring of Florida’s 911 emergency communications system by requiring consolidation of all 911 call-taking, emergency call handling, and dispatch services into a single, unified 911 call center within each county or through a regional interlocal agreement.

The bill significantly alters governance authority, funding mechanisms, and operational control of emergency communications and establishes mandatory compliance timelines, enhanced cybersecurity standards, and financial penalties for counties that fail to meet consolidation requirements.

II. PRESENT SITUATION

911 Emergency Communications – Existing Framework

Under current Florida law, counties and municipalities may operate one or more public safety answering points (PSAPs) through locally determined governance models. Municipal police and fire departments may directly operate or participate in dispatch services tailored to local geography, operational needs, special events, and seasonal population fluctuations.

Local governments retain discretion over dispatch governance, staffing, technology platforms, and interagency coordination, provided statutory minimum standards are met.

III. EFFECT OF THE BILL

1. Mandatory Unified 911 Call Centers

HB 1427 requires each county, and every public agency within the county, to provide 911, emergency call, and dispatch services from a single, unified 911 call center by January 1, 2029. Counties may establish a regional unified 911 call center through interlocal agreement.

If a county fails to unanimously designate an operator by January 1, 2027, the county sheriff is automatically deemed the operator of all 911 services, and all existing dispatch operations must be consolidated under the sheriff's authority.

2. Governance and Decision-Making

The bill requires formation of Emergency Communication Center (ECC) or Regional ECC executive boards composed of county officials, municipal representatives, and public safety agency heads. Selection of the 911 operator and funding levels must be approved by unanimous vote, limiting flexibility in resolving intergovernmental disputes.

3. Funding and Financial Penalties

State emergency services funding is redirected only to counties that establish a unified 911 call center. Counties that fail to comply become ineligible for state funding and are subject to a 25 percent annual reduction in emergency funding beginning January 1, 2029.

4. Operational Restrictions and Technology Requirements

HB 1427 restricts the transfer of emergency calls between 911 centers within the same county except under limited circumstances, and mandates interoperability and cybersecurity standards consistent with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) guidelines.

IV. FISCAL IMPACT

Local Governments

Potential fiscal impacts to the City of Key West include staff and professional service time required for consolidation planning, potential reassignment or displacement of dispatch personnel, technology integration expenses, and ongoing compliance costs associated with cybersecurity and interoperability requirements.

Failure to comply with HB 1427 may result in loss of state emergency services funding and recurring annual funding reductions.

State Government

The bill does not identify a direct fiscal impact to the state beyond administrative oversight, reporting, and rulemaking responsibilities.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Local Control and Home Rule

HB 1427 represents a significant reduction in municipal home rule authority by mandating consolidation of emergency communications and establishing a default transfer of authority to the county sheriff.

Public Safety Operations

A centralized, countywide dispatch model may reduce operational flexibility and limit the ability of municipal police and fire departments to tailor emergency response strategies to local conditions, special events, and peak tourism periods common in the City of Key West.

VI. DRAFTING ISSUES OR AMBIGUITIES

The bill does not address labor relations, collective bargaining impacts, or transition costs associated with dispatch consolidation. Additionally, the prohibition on call transfers may require further clarification to avoid unintended public safety consequences during complex or multi-jurisdictional incidents.

VII. EFFECTIVE DATE

The bill takes effect upon becoming law. Key implementation deadlines include January 1, 2027, for designation of a unified 911 operator, and January 1, 2029, for full statewide compliance.