

CITY COUNCIL REPORT



Meeting Date: July 2, 2026
General Plan Element: *Public Services & Facilities*
General Plan Goal: *Provide a safe environment for all citizens, visitors and private interests*

ACTION

Adopt Ordinance No. 4704, adding Sections 19-38 through 19-44 and Article IV to the Scottsdale Revised Code concerning misuse of 911 and emergency services.

BACKGROUND

Proposed Ordinance No. 4704 creates a new ordinance prohibiting the misuse of 911.

The City receives a substantial volume of 911 calls that do not involve crimes or emergencies. These calls tie up dispatchers, delay responses to genuine emergencies, and divert police and fire resources.

The Police and Fire Departments have expressed concern about the growing number of nuisance or non-emergency calls, including repeat callers who tie up emergency lines.

The Council Committee on Community Safety reviewed the proposed ordinance on May 13, 2026. Based on the Committee's input, staff updated the draft to incorporate the Committee's comments, including additional clarity on medical and animal-related emergencies. The Committee voted in support of the proposed ordinance.

ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT

Ordinance No. 4704 proposes creating a new ordinance prohibiting the misuse of 911. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure the proper use of the 911 emergency communications system, preserve public safety resources, and deter intentional misuse that diverts emergency services from genuine emergencies.

The key elements of the ordinance establish that the 911 system must be used solely for reporting crimes and emergencies, defines essential terms such as "911 system," "emergency," and "crime," make it a Class 1 misdemeanor to intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly contact 911 for non-emergency purposes, authorize courts to order reimbursement of emergency

Action Taken _____

response costs when misuse is intentional, and provide an affirmative defense for callers who had a reasonable, good-faith factual basis to believe an emergency existed.

Under the proposed ordinance, emergencies include, but are not limited to, fires, life-threatening situations, accidents, gas leaks, hazardous material incidents, medical calls and events, deceased persons, hazardous vehicles, suicide attempts, animals in danger or posing a danger, and missing persons. "Emergency" does not include any of the following, unless the caller has a good faith, reasonable factual basis to believe an emergency exists: non-hazardous nuisance issues, requests for general police or fire department information, requests for directions, calls made to complain about city services, utilities, or code enforcement matters, or any other issue that does not present an imminent threat to life, safety, property, or public order.

Under the proposed ordinance, crime includes, but is not limited to, crimes in progress, a crime that has already occurred, reckless driving, or any other moving traffic violation.

The City Attorney's Office, Police, and Fire Departments support the proposed ordinance.

RESOURCE IMPACTS

None. Existing staff will enforce the new ordinance. The ability to recover emergency response expenses may offset resource impacts in cases of intentional misuse.

OPTIONS & STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Approach: Adopt Ordinance No. 4704, adding Sections 19-38 through 19-44 and Article IV to the Scottsdale Revised Code concerning misuse of 911 and emergency services.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)

City Attorney, Police Department, Fire Department

STAFF CONTACTS (S)

Luis Santaella, City Attorney, lsantaella@scottsdaleaz.gov
Joseph LeDuc, Chief of Police, jleduc@scottsdaleaz.gov
Tom Shannon, Fire Chief, tshannon@scottsdaleaz.gov

APPROVED BY

Tom Shannon

Tom Shannon, Fire Chief
(480) 312-1821, tshannon@scottsdaleaz.gov

6/15/26

Date



Joseph, LeDuc Chief of Police
(480) 312-1900, jleduc@scottsdaleaz.gov

6/15/26

Date



Luis E. Santaella, City Attorney
(480) 312-2405, lsantaella@scottsdaleaz.gov

6/15/26

Date

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance No. 4704

ORDINANCE NO. 4704

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, ADDING SECTIONS 19-38 THROUGH 19-44 AND ARTICLE IV TO THE SCOTTSDALE REVISED CODE CONCERNING MISUSE OF 911 AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale as follows:

Section 1. Sections 19-38 through 19-44 of the Scottsdale Revised Code are added as follows:

Sec. 19-38-19-39. Reserved.

ARTICLE IV. CONCERNING MISUSE OF 911 AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Sec. 19-40. Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure the proper use of the 911 emergency communications system, preserve public safety resources, and deter intentional misuse that diverts emergency services from genuine emergencies.

Sec. 19-41. Definitions.

(A) For purposes of this article:

(1) *911 system* means a public safety answering point or communications center operated by a police or fire department that is capable of receiving 911 calls or texts.

(2) *Emergency* includes, but is not limited to, fires, life-threatening situations, accidents, gas leaks, hazardous material incidents, medical calls and events, deceased persons, hazardous vehicles, suicide attempts, animals in danger or posing a danger, and missing persons. "Emergency" does not include any of the following, unless the caller has a good faith, reasonable factual basis to believe an emergency exists: non-hazardous nuisance issues, requests for general police or fire department information, requests for directions, calls made to complain about city services, utilities, or code enforcement matters, or any other issue that does not present an imminent threat to life, safety, property, or public order.

(3) *Crime* includes, but is not limited to, any crime in progress, a crime that has already occurred, reckless driving, or any other moving traffic violation.

Sec. 19-42. Unlawful Use of the 911 System.

(A) The 911 system shall be used solely to report crimes and emergencies.

(B) It is a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person to intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly call, text, or otherwise communicate with the 911 system for any purpose other than to report a crime or an emergency.

Sec. 19 43 Recovery of Emergency Response Expenses.

(A) In addition to any other penalty authorized by law, the court may order, upon a finding of intentional misuse of the 911 system, that a person convicted of violating this article pay the expenses of the emergency response resulting from the violation.

(B) *Expenses of an emergency response* means the reasonable costs directly incurred by public agencies in making an appropriate emergency response to an incident.

(C) *Reasonable costs* include, but are not limited to: The costs of providing police, firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical services at the scene; the salaries and benefits of the personnel who respond to the incident; equipment, materials, and supplies used during the response; and any other directly related, actual costs incurred in the course of the response.

Sec 19-44. Affirmative Defense.

It is an affirmative defense that the person had a good-faith, reasonable factual basis for making a call, text, or other communication to the 911 system.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale this ____ day of _____, 2026.

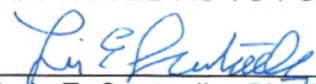
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, an Arizona
municipal corporation

ATTEST:

Ben Lane, City Clerk

Lisa Borowsky, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Luis E. Santaella, City Attorney

19236788