



# Telecommunications Bulletin

## Customer Service Center (CSC)

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### To Page or not To Page? Please evaluate your agency's paging needs by August 1, 2011

Paging is a technology that is rapidly becoming obsolete. Compared with other wireless options such as cell phones, smart phones and push-to-talk devices, the once useful pager is becoming a technological relic.

The State of Illinois is not exempt from this trend and we have previously sent out several notifications of decommissioned paging towers around the state. More will follow. CMS will continue to advise you when additional towers are removed.

The current USA Mobility statewide paging contract expires June 30, 2012, with no renewal options. Under its terms, third party paging services may (or may not) be available after towers are decommissioned. When available, the current monthly cost for third party pagers are \$11.00 for numeric and \$17.50 for alphanumeric service. Going forward, there is absolutely no guarantee that any paging coverage, at any cost, will be available in many areas throughout the state; thus, the CSC does not recommend any continued reliance on paging service.

The best option for replacing pagers is a cell phone. A flat rate plan is \$7.00 per month and \$.08/minute for airtime. If desired, the device can be programmed to disallow outbound calls or restrict it to call only chosen numbers. Text packages and push-to-talk are also available and vary by carrier and size of package. In considering alternative wireless solutions, the CSC can assist with testing the cellular coverage in multiple locations both inside and outside building locations.

In order to implement alternative solutions, you must carefully evaluate your existing wireless needs and develop a plan to migrate current paging users to other devices. The CSC can provide paging usage reports to help in the evaluation process and pricing of proposed alternative services. Consider and answer these questions.

1. How many pagers are currently in use?
2. Does each user have a genuine "critical" need for a mobile device?
3. Which alternate technology will meet each user's needs?

In some areas, the vendors may need to conduct further coverage testing and, where cost permits, make needed facility modifications. If a building modification is not feasible, Betty will work with a coordinator on a case-by-case basis to develop other, creative solutions. All testing requires advance planning and facility modifications require contracts and time to implement; thus the earlier your needs are identified, the sooner we can assist you in solidifying plans and implementing solutions to meet your needs.

Please contact Betty by August 1, 2011 if your agency needs are critical and dependent on paging services or if you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter.

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