



# MENDOCINO COUNTY S.A.F.E.

## SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES

**Agenda # 3**  
SAFE Meeting  
6/7/2021

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**TITLE:** Mendocino County SAFE Call Box Update

**DATE:** 5/27/2021

**SUBMITTED BY:** Alexis Pedrotti, Project Manager

**MEETING DATE:** 06/07/21

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**Background:**

The Mendocino County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) is currently operating 141 call boxes throughout Mendocino County in various locations along State Routes 1, 20, 128, 101, 162, 175 and 253. Of these, 97 are traditional cellular call boxes and the remaining are newer boxes using satellite technology.

In 2018 Verizon announced the termination of 3G Cellular Service, set to occur originally in December 2019. Our installation contractor, CASE Systems, began actively working to develop new radios for the SAFE programs around the state that would be compatible with the upgraded 4G Verizon Network. This development, testing and initial deployment took time. Fortunately, Verizon pushed their 3G termination date out one year allowing some additional time.

Mendocino SAFE took the approach to wait until some of the larger SAFE organizations around the state found solutions to initial 4G upgrade issues. Last year, staff participated in some promising discussions with CASE Systems and Verizon Wireless. CASE reported that since the 4G Radio conversion began over a year ago, and improvements had occurred with the new radio competencies, it was an appropriate time for Mendocino SAFE to start deploying the new radios.

In February, several call boxes began experiencing 3G Radio problems and were no longer working properly. Mendocino SAFE purchased the 4G Radios and began installing them in March 2021. One thing that remained unclear was how the new service and radios would work in our rural areas. Many issues have been experienced, including a lack of service areas within the new 4G service, obtaining new SIM Cards and service plans with Verizon, and enabling communication between the call boxes and the maintenance computer for critical reporting.

Once deployed, the newly upgraded radios initially seemed to be operating well, until more recently. Unfortunately, several of the new radios installed around the county have recently quit working. CASE has immediately put attention to this matter and has been diligently working with their lab and tech team to find a solution. To date, we do not have resolution and are unsure what remains to be the problem.

To conclude, there have been several challenges with the 4G conversion, but the most recent hurdle with the radio operation is concerning, and the cause is still unknown. Staff hopes to have answers from CASE Systems, Inc. soon and will be able to get many of these out-of-service boxes up and running again.

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**Action Required:**

No action necessary, informational update only.

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**Alternatives:** None.

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**Recommendation:** None.