

911 FAQs

Why did my house number have to change?

Some addresses in town were not compliant with the 911 addressing system as specified by Sussex County and the State of Delaware. The Town Council voted unanimously to fix addresses that are not in compliance. For example, properties with multiple dwelling units were not identified properly for emergency responders.

Did the Town of Dewey Beach have other options?

Yes. 1) Do nothing – leave all the addresses as they are. This would have put citizens at risk because emergency response vehicles may have been unable to find them in an emergency. The Town could also have been held liable. 2) All addresses within the town could have been changed to a standard 5-digit number assigned by Sussex County. With this option, every address in town would have changed and the town would have been released from all liability. The Town Council chose instead to fix only those addresses that are not compliant. The Town Council recognized that this may cause some hardship to those property owners who have to change.

How was my new house number chosen?

The E911 Administrator for Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and Sussex County staff prepared a first draft of address changes based upon properties they had identified as non-compliant. Sussex County and the Town of Dewey Beach collaborated on reviewing the changes and notifying property owners.

When do I need to make the changes?

Property owners were notified by mail in September, 2012. All address changes must be complete by October 1, 2013.

Who should I notify about my new address?

Notify anyone who sends correspondence, bills, or other mail such as tax or utility bills to your Dewey Beach address, including Sussex County and the Town of Dewey Beach. This includes Sussex County and the Town of Dewey Beach. Utility and tax billing addresses for Sussex County can be changed online at www.sussexcountyde.gov.

Do I need to change my deed?

No. Deeds are based on the legal description of the property using map and parcel numbers.

How should I display the numbers on my house or business? What if my house can't be seen from the street?

Go to www.sussexcountyde.gov/dept/assessment/addressing/ and click on "How to Properly Post a 911 Address". This document gives detailed information on posting addresses, including what to do in special circumstances such as long driveways and buildings that can't be seen from the street.

I haven't changed my address yet. What address should I give to a 911 operator – my old address or my new address?

The new addresses are already part of the 911 system. There could be some confusion during the transitional period if your house is not displaying your new number. If you have not yet changed your house number, it would be best to give the 911 operator your new number which will bring them to the correct location. Also tell them what number is posted on the house, if it is different, to avoid confusion when they arrive. You can also give the operator additional identifying information, for example, "upstairs unit" or "the yellow cottage in the rear". Please change your house number as soon as possible for your personal safety.

What if I change my address before my neighbor and we both have the same number displayed?

If possible, explain this to the 911 operator and also give them identifying information to find you. All properties should display their new address by October 1.

What will happen if I don't change my address?

There is a possibility that emergency responders will not be able to find you in an emergency. You may also be responsible if your non-compliance causes confusion for an emergency responder on your street. All addresses must be in compliance by October 1.

What should I do if I think my new address will make it difficult for an emergency response vehicle to find my home?

Contact the Town of Dewey Beach by phone or email and explain the issue. The Town will work with Sussex County to ensure that your home can be found in an emergency.

I'm not sure if my address changed. Where can I look?

The Sussex County online mapping system has this information. Go to www.sussexcountyde.gov/dept/assessment/addressing/ and click on "Online Map Search". If you are having difficulty finding the information you need via this online facility, Sussex County staff are available to help by calling (302) 833-1176

Is there anything else I can do to help ensure that emergency responders can find me?

If you have a land line, contact your local telephone company and verify your 911 address. Also verify your 911 address with Sussex County via their website. Go to www.sussexcountyde.gov. Click on Residents and 911 Addressing. This can be done regardless of your billing address.

Post your property address near the telephone or in another prominent indoor location. This is especially important for renters, guests, and babysitters.

If someone in your house has special needs, you may register that information at www.de911assist.delaware.gov. This is a voluntary registry. The information entered will be shared with '911', fire, police, and EMT personnel, and will be used by emergency planners and first responders in times of crisis.