

## Information About Calling 9-1-1

### **How to call 911 for the best and most expedient response:**

Dial 9-1-1 on your phone. It's a free call. You can use any kind of phone. If you are calling from an office, remember you may have to dial a code (like 8 or 9) to get an outside line, before making your call.

### ***Stay calm.***

In many large cities, 9-1-1 calls are answered by a dispatcher if one is available. However, if all call-takers are busy on other calls, the 9-1-1 call is answered by a call distributor that holds the call, and then automatically routes it to the first available call-taker. Do not hang up if you reach a recording, and try to call back. Stay on the line and your call will be answered in order. If you hang up, your call will be delayed because you will be placed at the end of other callers.

When the dispatcher answers, simply state what you need; "I need the police", "I want to report a fire", "I need an ambulance". Or, briefly describe the type of incident you are reporting. For example, "I'm reporting an auto fire," or "I'm reporting an unconscious person," or "I'm reporting a shoplifter."

If your call is answered by a law enforcement agency and you are reporting a fire or medical emergency, the call-taker will transfer your call---stay on the line while the call is transferred.

The call-taker who answers will need information about the incident.

Wait for the call-taker to ask questions, then answer clearly and calmly explaining what the emergency is. Do not yell into the phone. If the emergency is so severe that you can only dial 911, but not talk, the Police will respond to the address that the 911 phone call came from without you talking or giving the address, assuming you are not using a cell phone.

Do not become upset that it is "taking too long", or that "they are asking too many questions" remember, while one dispatcher is talking to you on the phone, another dispatcher is putting your call out on radio to the emergency personnel.

### ***Be prepared to follow the dispatcher's line of questioning, such as:***

A) WHAT is happening, WHERE the situation is occurring, WHEN did the incident occur, WHO is involved, WEAPON involvement, INJURIES, etc.)

B) Be prepared to describe the persons involved in any incident. This includes their race, sex, age, height and weight, color of hair, description of clothing, and presence of a hat, glasses or facial hair.

C) If there is a vehicle involved, be prepared to describe any vehicles involved in the incident. This includes the color, year, make, model and type of vehicle (sedan, pick-up, sport utility, van, tanker truck, flatbed, etc.). If the vehicle is parked the dispatcher will need to know the direction it's facing. If the vehicle is moving or has left, the dispatcher will need to know the last direction.

D) For reporting a fire, tell what is on fire. Give the exact location, if someone is in danger or in the structure, or if there is a danger of explosion from combustibles. Always get out of danger.

If you are not in a position to give full answers to the call-taker (the suspect is nearby), stay on the phone and the dispatcher will ask you questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."

Even though they can probably see your location on the computer screen, they are still required to confirm the information, so do not get upset when they ask you for your location even though they seem to already know it. Make sure to give your name and address loudly and clearly.

If you are a cellular caller, your telephone number and location will not be displayed for the dispatcher's reference. You must be able to describe your location so emergency units can respond. Be aware of your current city or town, address, highway and direction, nearby cross-streets or interchanges, or other geographic points of reference. Cellular 9-1-1 calls are frequently routed to a central office that could be many miles from your location so be prepared to give the dispatcher your complete location---city or town, address or location, inside or outside, what floor or room, etc.

Let the call-taker guide the conversation. Be patient as the dispatcher asks you questions. While you are answering the dispatcher's questions, he/she is entering or writing down the information. If you are reporting an emergency, most likely a response is being made while you are still on the line with the dispatcher.

In some cases, the call-taker will give you directions on what to do. Listen carefully, follow each step exactly, and ask for clarification if you don't understand.

Secure any dogs or other pets that may interfere with the emergency response. Gather any medications the patient is taking and which the medical crew will need to take with the patient.

Do not hang up until the dispatcher says it's OK to do so. If you get disconnected while talking to 911, always try to call back

Do not nod your head while talking. Instead, answer "yes" or "no" out loud.

No matter what happens, stay calm.

### **What NOT to do when you call 911:**

Do not call 911 unless it is an emergency. Non-emergency calls should be placed on normal telephone numbers which may be found in the telephone book. Calls on these lines are answered at the same location, by the same dispatchers, but they don't tie up the "special" 9-1-1 lines.

Below are some examples of when NOT to call 911:

- When the power goes off. Call the utility company instead.
- An emergency for your pet
- To report a traffic jam
- As a game or prank. It's against the law to make prank 911 calls, and you could keep someone who really needs help from getting it.
- A property damage accident
- A break-in to a vehicle when suspect is gone

- If the weather is threatening. Listen to TV and radio stations for weather information.
- Theft of property (when suspect is gone)
- Don't call to find out if school is open.
- Vandalism (when suspect is gone)
- For directory assistance
- Panhandlers
- Intoxicated persons who are not disorderly
- Cars blocking the street or alleys.
- Don't call for a taxi.
- To ask about government services
- To practice calling 911
- For information. Call 4-1-1 for directory assistance.
- When you're bored and just want to talk
- For paying tickets
- To check the time.
- To find out a phone number.
- Testing to see if the phone works
- To ask the Police-Fire-Rescue Squad a question
- To Get a Cat Out of a Tree - Only call 911 regarding animals if the animal is endangering humans. 911 is intended for human emergencies only, all calls to request assistance for animals lost or in distress should go to an agency's non-emergency number.

To teach kids to call 911 - While it is extremely important to teach kids to call 911, it's a bad idea to actually have them do it when there is no emergency. Kids learn by example. If mom and dad seem to think it's OK to call 911 just to practice, then they will, too.

### **911 Safety Tips:**

If you dialed 911 by mistake, do not hang up the phone. Instead, stay on the line and explain to the dispatcher that you dialed by mistake and that you do not have an emergency. If you hang up, a dispatcher will call back to confirm that there is no emergency. If you don't answer, a police officer or deputy must be dispatched to confirm that you are OK. This will needlessly take resources away from genuine emergencies.

Do not program 911 into your auto-dial telephone. You won't forget the number, and programming the number invites accidental dialing of the number.

Never say "nine eleven," since there is no eleven on the phone keypad, children can become confused in an emergency situation. Always say "Nine-One-One."

In addition to knowing your address, it is important that emergency responders can see your house number from the street. The next time you are returning to your home at night, pretend that you are a policeman, firefighter, or paramedic trying to find your house. Can you easily see your house number from the street? If not, you have some work to do. Mark your house number in large, reflective numbers that can easily be seen from the street.

Keep your address and phone number posted near every phone in your house. It is very stressful during an emergency and it is very easy to forget your address. By posting this information, you as well as any visitors at your home can dial 911 and get help quickly.

Teach your children and grandchildren how to use 911 wisely in case of an emergency, like: if a parent, relative or friend is sick or unconscious, If the child is lost and can find a telephone, If a molester is bothering the child or friends, or If the child, or someone else, is injured.

Help your children learn their address and phone number at an early age.

Make sure to teach your child how to properly use your phone.

Always call 911 from a safe place. If there is a fire in the house, get to a safe place before you call 911.

If you live in a region that is subject to natural disasters (earthquake, tornado, hurricane, etc.), pre-plan a method of communicating with family, friends and relatives before an incident occurs. Choose any emergency contact outside the area that will be affected by the disaster. Make them the relay point for those who want to contact you. After the disaster hits, you can make just one telephone call to your contact, and have that information relayed to all those you care about.

If you are not sure if you have an emergency, call 911 and explain your problem to the 911 dispatcher.

This information is courtesy of [www.911callers.com](http://www.911callers.com)