

Your Guide to Calling 9-1-1 Emergency Services

To best respond to an emergency situation, call takers, dispatchers and first responders need your help. Please familiarize yourself and those living or visiting your home with the following tips. This will ensure that the 9-1-1 call taker will be able to process your emergency call efficiently and send assistance as quickly as possible.



When should you call 9-1-1?

Call only in an emergency! Please do not call for general information, directions, weather or other non-emergency information. If you are not sure whether your situation is an emergency, call 9-1-1. Remember though, if you tie up 9-1-1 with non-emergency calls, you may be endangering someone else's life.

What you should do when calling 9-1-1?

1. When calling 9-1-1, speak clearly and be prepared to provide the:
 - **location** of the incident
 - **telephone number** you are calling from
 - **description of the emergency.** The call taker will send the appropriate emergency resources based on the description and nature of the emergency.
2. **Give your exact location** – a street address and nearest intersection (cross street), including town, if possible. This information helps the 9-1-1 call taker send emergency response to the right location. If you are unsure of the location, look for landmarks, large buildings, street signs or mile markers to determine your location.
3. **Do not hang up** until the call taker ends the call. If you are cut off, always call back and explain that you were cut off.
4. **Stay on the line**, you may need to be transferred to another agency that can provide further assistance for your emergency.
5. **Provide all the information requested** to the call taker. It will help them help you!

Calling 9-1-1 with your cell phone:

- **Pull over** if driving, if it is safe to do so (this reduces the chance of a dropped call)
- **Provide your exact location, street address, intersection, mile marker on highways and cell phone number** to the call taker. If you are unsure of the location, look for landmarks, large buildings, street signs, etc. Cell phone location technology is not always available or accurate
- **Do not program 9-1-1 into your speed dial.** Accidental calls from cell phones slow down response in 9-1-1 call centers and account for nearly one quarter of all 9-1-1 calls
- Calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone is always free and it is never necessary to dial an area code.

Text messaging and sending cell phone photos to 9-1-1:

At this time, 9-1-1 communications centers are not able to receive and/or respond to text messages or cell phone images using 9-1-1 dialing.

What you can do before an emergency occurs:

- Share these 9-1-1 tips with family, friends, babysitters, and neighbors
- Post the address, cross street or intersection and phone number of your residence near the phone
- Make sure your house is clearly marked with its correct street number and easy to see from the street. Do not rely on curbside painted house numbers – they can be blocked by a parked car.

This information is a public service of:

