

What to Know When Calling 911

STAY CALM

It is important to take a deep breath and not get too excited. When you get excited, you have a lot of adrenaline flowing through your veins and this will impede your speech. It may cause you to talk too fast, too slow, or begin stuttering that will make you difficult to understand.

Any situation that requires you to call 911 is an emergency, and the dispatcher understands this. With you remaining calm, the dispatcher can assist in getting you a quicker response.

KNOW YOUR LOCATION

Most 911 Centers have enhanced equipment that will assist them in locating callers. However, some telephones are out of date, and it is required that the dispatchers confirm your telephone number and location. This will assist in getting you help in a timely manner. This too will help dispatchers contact you if there are telephone problems and the call is disconnected.

WAIT FOR THE 911 DISPATCHER TO ASK YOU QUESTIONS

Dispatchers will be sending you help as soon as possible; but they will need to ask you some important questions in order to do so. It is important that you listen and answer their questions quickly and calmly. Let the dispatcher guide the conversation. Remember when they are asking you questions, your responses will determine what emergency personnel will be sent to your location (Police, Fire, Ambulance). It may seem like it is taking a long time for the dispatcher to ask you all of the questions, just know that as they are speaking with you, help is already on its way as they dispatch during the questioning process.

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

In some cases, the dispatcher may give you directions. Listen carefully and follow their advice. If you do not understand, ask the dispatcher to explain it to you.

DO NOT HANG UP

Stay on the telephone until the dispatcher tells you it is ok to hang up. Anything can happen and the responders need to know your situation. For example: if the house is on fire, or if anyone is inside.

BE PREPARED

Make sure that you're aware of each of the following:

Where is the emergency?

The emergency is not always located where the caller is. Always be aware of your surroundings and where you are. Try to keep a watch out for road signs, business names, and intersections when you travel.

Nature of the Emergency

Do you need Police, Fire, or Medical assistance? A detailed, yet concise description: What happened? Is anyone hurt? How were they hurt (gunshot, vehicular accident)? What is on fire (house, garbage)?

DO's and DON'Ts of Calling 911

DO'S :

Do teach your children how to use 911.

Do practice with a pretend phone.

Do make sure they understand it is important only to call 911 in an emergency.

DON'TS:

Don't call 911 for directions.

Don't call 911 if you are locked out of a vehicle (unless a child is inside).

Don't call 911 for telephone directory assistance.

Don't make prank calls.

Don't give your child an old cell phone as a toy before taking out the battery. An inactive phone still has 911 capability.