

A photograph of a hospital entrance with a red sign that says "EMERGENCY". The sign is mounted on a white structure. Above the sign, there is a "CLEARANCE 12'" sign. The building has large windows and a modern architectural style.

EMERGENCY

9-1-1

MAKING THE RIGHT CALL

Since 911 was introduced in 1968 as a universal number for reaching emergency assistance, efforts to raise public awareness about 911 have been effective. Most people though, rarely face emergency situations and lack firsthand experience with the 911 system. Public safety answering points (PSAPs) follow protocols to reassure callers and guide them through a sequence of questions and instructions. The questions allow call-takers to take charge of the situation and quickly obtain information needed to dispatch the appropriate resources to the right location.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

Stay calm, speak clearly, and stay on the phone until the emergency operator tells you to hang up.

KNOW YOUR LOCATION. “Where is your emergency?” is the first question dispatchers ask since location is key information to send help. If possible, give your exact location if known. That’s especially important if you’re calling from your cell phone, as dispatchers might not be able to pinpoint your location. If you don’t know where you are, look for buildings, landmarks, intersections and street signs. Make sure your house numbers are visible from the street, both day and night, before there is an emergency.

ANSWER THE DISPATCHER'S QUESTIONS. “Let the operator drive the call”. Follow all instructions and be ready to answer questions. The most important of which is your location. You should also be prepared to answer questions about the person's condition such as: Is the person awake? Are they breathing? Is there an injury? Is the person in a dangerous spot or position where further injury could occur? Has the person experienced a recent major medical event? Does the person have a chronic medical condition? Your answers help dispatchers determine what kind and how much help you need.

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS. Dispatchers are trained to help you and coach first aid techniques while help responds for example, they can instruct you how to do CPR, perform the Heimlich maneuver or tell you how to stop bleeding. It is important to tell the emergency dispatcher who is hurt or sick and what happened. The dispatcher will also need to know the current condition of the victim and if any help is being given.



WHAT TO DO UNTIL HELP ARRIVES:

Follow any instructions you have been given by the emergency dispatch operator.

Do not try to move someone who is injured (unless they are in danger).

Try to keep a victim warm.

If someone is with you, send them to meet the ambulance.

Make it easy for emergency responders to spot you by turning on a porch light or marking your location with a flare or bright cloth.

9-1-1

WHEN TO MAKE THE CALL



911 is to be used only in emergency situations. An emergency is any situation that requires immediate assistance from law enforcement, fire department or emergency medical services.

Calling 911 activates an entire network of highly-trained emergency medical workers. Their time and expertise are valuable and should not be wasted on non-emergencies. Generally speaking, people are aware that they should call 911 in an emergency, but they are less aware of the circumstances in which they should not call 911. Non-emergency calls to 911 impede the efficiency of responders and call-takers by interfering with legitimate 911 calls.

WHEN TO CALL 911

- Medical emergencies
- Heart attack or stroke
- Someone faints or collapses
- Someone is badly injured
- Domestic Violence
- Fires
- Burglary, theft, or crime in progress
- Vehicle accident with life threatening injuries
- Suspicious activities
- Other Emergencies
- Chemical/Fuel Spill

WHEN NOT TO CALL 911

- To get information
- Power outages
- Report a broken water main or fire hydrant
- Loud party or barking dog
- Transportation to a doctor appointment
- Pay tickets
- Precription refills or pick-ups
- Treatment for minor cuts/abrasions
- Prank
- Non-life threatening chronic medical condition
- To receive priority care at emergency room

Sometimes it's hard to decide whether to call 9-1-1 instead of driving to an emergency room yourself. If you are not sure what to do, you can make a better decision by asking yourself the following questions:

Does the victim's condition seem to be life-threatening?

Could moving the victim on your own cause further injury?

Does the victim need the skills or equipment of a paramedic or an emergency medical technician?

Would the distance or traffic conditions cause a significant delay in getting the victim to an emergency room?

Could the victim's condition worsen and become life-threatening on your way to the emergency room?

If you are ever in doubt of whether a situation is an emergency you should call 9-1-1. It's better to be safe and allow the 9-1-1 call-taker to determine if you need emergency assistance.

THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES TEAM

Emergency Dispatchers answer emergency calls, take your information, and send help.

First Responders are police officers and firefighters who are first to arrive at the scene. They assist victims until EMS arrives and are often trained as EMTs or paramedics.

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) have various levels of training. Duties include driving ambulances and emergency vehicles to the scene, assisting with rescues, and performing basic emergency care.

Paramedics are EMTs with the highest level of training. They can perform medical procedures at the scene or in the ambulance. Using radio communications, paramedics often get instructions from physicians.

Emergency Nurses are specially trained to treat emergency patients. They are the first contact at the emergency room. They meet the ambulance, get the patient's medical information, and arrange for the doctor to see the patient.

Emergency Physicians are doctors who specialize in treating people who are seriously injured or become sick very suddenly.