

CALLING 911

Depending on the type of telephone you use, you may need to be aware of special safety tips to ensure emergency operators can get the information needed when you call 911.

You can typically call 911 from a traditional home or business phone and most cell phones and receive either basic or enhanced 911 services. Customers in locations where the emergency center is not equipped to receive your telephone number and address have basic 911. With basic 911, the local emergency operator answering the call will not have your call back number or your exact location, so you must be prepared to give them this information. Until you give the operator your phone number, he/she may not be able to call you back or dispatch help if the call is not completed or is not forwarded, is dropped or disconnected, or if you are unable to speak. With enhanced 911 service, the operator can see your address and phone number and will know where to send help if you cannot speak or are disconnected. However, the operator may still ask questions about your location to confirm the information provided by the system.

If you use a telephone that is connected to a broadband or internet cable service, you will need to contact your service provider for information on connecting to 911 as each service is different. Also, remember that on these types of systems, 911 Dialing service will not function in the event of a broadband or power outage or if your broadband or ISP service is terminated.

When to use 911

Call 911 when someone's health, safety or property is threatened.

When it isn't an emergency

If there is no immediate risk to someone's health, safety or property, you can use a non-emergency number to ask for help.

911 safety tips

- When reporting an emergency, make sure you are in a safe location before you call 911. If there is a fire in your home, evacuate yourself and family and then call 911 from a safe location.
- Teach everyone in your family to call 911 for emergencies only. Make sure children know when they should and should not call 911.
- Do not program 911 into your phone's speed dial function. Accidental calls to 911 delay emergency operators from assisting others with actual emergencies.
- If you accidentally call 911, stay on the line and explain to the emergency operator what happened. If you hang up without speaking to the operator, they will try to call you back or send the police to your address.
- Listen carefully to the emergency operator, answer all questions and wait for further instructions.

911 safety tips

- If you have a traditional cordless telephone that requires recharging the battery, consider placing the charging unit in your bedroom so you can quickly call 911 at night.
- It is a good idea to keep one telephone in the house that does not require connection to a power source so you can still call 911 in the event of a power outage.
- If you need to dial 911 from your vehicle, pull over and stop driving before using your cell phone.
- The emergency operator will not know your exact location. When asked, give the operator your phone number and location.
- Do not call 911 to test your phone. Every non-emergency call ties up a critical lifeline that someone with a true emergency needs.
- Do not give old cell phones to children to use as toys. As a safety feature, many unregistered/activated phones can still contact 911.
- Contact your cell phone provider to ask about its 911 service.

- Some newer cell phones come with an option to activate GPS when you dial 911 with a cell phone. Consider turning this function on so that in the event you cannot speak in an emergency, your phone can be used as a GPS to aid in finding you.

Fire Safety Education ... the Best Fire Prevention

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