

9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS FAQ

Q: When should I call 9-1-1?

A: 9-1-1 is for emergencies or things that could become emergencies.

If the situation seems urgent and has the potential to become dangerous, call 9-1-1. A Telecommunicator will determine whether you should be handled by 9-1-1 or can be transferred to another person or agency. All other calls should be directed to our non-emergency number which is (309) 787-8520.

Q: What if I call 9-1-1 accidentally?

A: If you accidentally dial 9-1-1, do not hang up. Stay on the line and tell the Telecommunicator that everything is alright. If you don't, the Telecommunicator may think that something is wrong and send a police officer to check.

Q: Why do Telecommunicators ask so many questions when I call 9-1-1?

A: Telecommunicator needs to get accurate information to allow officers to make the best decision on how to approach the situation. Telecommunicators handling fire and paramedic calls also have to consider the well-being of the public and the safety of the firefighters, police, and paramedics. Callers will be asked:

- Where
- What
- Who
- When
- (maybe) Why

The information that you provide the Telecommunicator is relayed to the responding officers, paramedic, or firefighters while they are on their way to the call.

Q: If I call 9-1-1, what will they ask me?

A: What is the location of the emergency?

This is the address where the emergency is actually happening. If you don't know the actual address, tell the Telecommunicator and then:

Give cross streets or a "hundred block"

- Provide landmarks, business names or parks near the emergency
- Look at the house numbers in the area
- If you are calling from inside a home or business, look on a piece of mail

When asked for a location, we need you to be specific. Also, if the suspect just left (such as a theft suspect), we need to know which way that suspect went and a description of how he looked.

If you are asked to describe a suspect, start with the most obvious things. Some examples are:

■ "He was a white male" "He/she was at least 6 feet tall"

■ "He/she had a gun" "He/she was wearing a bright red jacket"

"He had a long brown beard"

If you describe a vehicle, include:

- License plate information, including the state
- Color
- Year (If unknown, tell the Telecommunicator if it was a new or old vehicle.)
- Make (Was it a Honda? Nissan? Ford?)
- Body style (Was it a 4-door? Hatchback? Pick-up truck?)
- Other things you may remember about it

What is the phone number you're calling from? This is the number to the phone you're actually calling from. We need this in case we have to call you back.

What is the problem? Tell us exactly what happened. Be as concise as possible. Tell us what the problem is now, not what led up to the problem.

- "I see a fight on the corner of West 4th Street and Andalusia Road"
- "I am fighting with my husband"
- "There is a car accident westbound on I-280 at the Milan off-ramp"

We also need to know if you're going to be at, or near, the scene when we arrive because the police may need to talk to you, or you may need to point out the exact location. We may ask you what kind of car you are in, or what color clothing you are wearing.

Q: Why do the 9-1-1 Telecommunicators ask so many questions?

A: The Telecommunicators ask very specific questions while preparing to send an ambulance out. You will be asked a series of questions that will help determine the response or paramedics to the call. The paramedics will be prepared to help the patient with the information that you have provided.

- What is the location of the emergency? (Where are the paramedics needed?)
- Tell me exactly what is happening (with the patient right now)

- How old is the patient? (If you don't know, say so and then give a guess of the age)
- Is the patient conscious and breathing?

Q: If I call to report a fire, what should I tell the Telecommunicator?

A: You should be prepared to answer questions like these:

- Where is the fire?
- What is on fire?
- How large is the fire? (This is only an estimate; think about the size of the fire to something common: the size of a living room, the size of a football field, bigger than a grocery store parking lot.)
- Are there any structures threatened? Are there flames moving close to any home or buildings
- Do you know if anyone is inside the housing or building?
- Do you know if anyone is hurt?

While you are answering these questions, the Telecommunicator is also preparing to send the appropriate fire stations and getting help on the way.

Q: When I call 9-1-1, why do I get asked to hold on?

A: The same Telecommunicators who answer the 9-1-1 calls also answer the non-emergency calls for service for the Milan Police Department. When the dispatch center is busy, the Telecommunicators will have to ask the non-emergency callers to hold on while they answer the 9-1-1 calls. Every effort is made to get back to you as quickly as possible, and your patience and understanding is greatly appreciated.

Tammy Bedford

Manager

9-1-1 Communications Center

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