

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is 9-1-1?

Nine-one-one is the number most people in the U.S. and some in International countries call to get help in a police, fire or medical emergency. In some places, you may be able to be connected with Poison Control by calling 9-1-1, but you should check with local officials in your area to make sure. A 9-1-1 call goes over dedicated phone lines to the 9-1-1 answering point closest to the caller, and trained personnel then send the emergency help needed.

What is Enhanced 9-1-1?

Enhanced 9-1-1, or E9-1-1, is a system which routes an emergency call to the 9-1-1 center closest to the caller, AND automatically displays the caller's phone number and address. The 9-1-1 call taker will typically ask the caller to verify the information, which appears on his or her computer screen. In most areas, phone number and location information is not yet available for 9-1-1 calls made from a cellular/wireless phone.

Who pays for 9-1-1?

Each household or business pays a small monthly fee for 9-1-1 service on each telephone line that appears on their phone bill. There is no per-call charge for calling 9-1-1. However, EMS/ambulances dispatched through 9-1-1 may charge for taking someone to the hospital; this is a separate ambulance charge, not a 9-1-1 charge.

When should you use 9-1-1?

Nine-one-one is only to be used in emergency situations. An emergency is any situation that requires immediate assistance from the police/sheriff, the fire department or an ambulance. 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 let the 9-1-1 call taker determine if you need emergency assistance.

Do not call 9-1-1:

- for information
- for directory assistance
- when you're bored and just want to talk
- for paying tickets
- for your pet
- as a prank

If you call 9-1-1 by mistake, do not hang up. Tell the call taker what happened so they know there really isn't an emergency.

What about 9-1-1 prank calls?

It's a prank call when someone calls 9-1-1 for a joke, or calls 9-1-1 and hangs up. Prank calls not only waste time and money, but can also be dangerous. If 9-1-1 lines or call takers are busy with prank calls, someone with a real emergency may not be able to get the help they need. In most places, it's against the law to make prank 9-1-1 calls.

How do you make a 9-1-1 call?

In an emergency, dial 9-1-1 on your phone. It's a free call. You can use any kind of phone: push button, rotary, cellular/wireless, cordless, or pay phone. (With some pay phones, you may need coins to get a dial tone; with many wireless phones, Enhanced 9-

1-1 does not yet work.)

Stay calm and state your emergency

Speak loudly and clearly. Give the 9-1-1 call taker your name, phone number and the address where help is needed.

Answer the call taker's questions. Stay on the telephone if it's safe to do so, and don't hang up until the call taker tells you to.

What if a 9-1-1 caller doesn't speak English?

When necessary, a 9-1-1 call taker can add an interpreter from an outside service to the line. A non-English speaking caller may hear a short conversation in English and some clicking sounds as the interpreter is added to the line.

What if a 9-1-1 caller is Deaf, or hearing/speech impaired?

Communications centers that answer 9-1-1 calls have special text telephones for responding to 9-1-1 calls from Deaf or hearing/speech impaired callers.

If a caller uses a TTY/TDD, the caller should:

Stay calm, place the phone receiver in the TTY, dial 9-1-1.

After the call is answered, press the TTY keys several times. This may help shorten the time necessary to respond to the call.

Give the call taker time to connect their TTY. If necessary, press the TTY keys again. The 9-1-1 call taker should answer and type "GA" for Go Ahead.

Tell what is needed-police, fire department, or ambulance. Give your name, phone number and the address where help is needed.

Stay on the telephone if it is safe. Answer the call taker's questions.

If a Deaf or hearing/speech impaired caller doesn't have a TTY/TDD, the caller should call 9-1-1 and don't hang up. Not hanging up leaves the line open. With most 9-1-1 calls, the caller's address is displayed on the call taker's screen and help will be sent.

This information was obtained from the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) website. For more information, please go to <http://www.nena.org>.