

# Calling 911



For more than 50 years, Americans have relied on 911 in emergencies. As with other emergency preparedness, it's important to have a plan in place for when you need to make that call.

When adrenaline is high in an emergency, it's not uncommon to forget important information. In our all-hazard emergency response training, we recommend having a flipchart on the wall in each classroom or office that includes procedures for crisis events. This should also include the exact location, including the street address, building name/number, floor, and room number, so that it can be easily shared with the dispatcher.

When an emergency happens, call 911 as soon as you can safely do so. Do NOT assume someone else will call or that emergency services will arrive. You will not overwhelm them with too many calls.

If possible, call from a landline, as they always give dispatch the address you are calling from. If you must use a cell phone, be clear about your location.



When you reach the 911 operator, be prepared to share the following:

- ❖ "This is an emergency."
- ❖ A description of the emergency
- ❖ Whether you need an ambulance, fire and/or police
- ❖ Your exact location
- ❖ Your name
- ❖ Your call-back number

Stay on the line! Do not hang up until you are told to do so.

Although we recommend calling from a landline, we know these are no longer ubiquitous. 80% of 911 calls now come from mobile devices, and 911 is being updated to keep up with these changes.

Next Generation 911 (NG911) is an IP-based system that will replace the analog system we have used for decades. This will increase reliability and allow text messages with photo and video files to be sent directly to the 911 network. The new system will also help answering centers manage call overload in natural disasters and transfer calls based on caller location data.

The system for identifying where the call is coming from will also greatly improve and result in faster response times. The FCC estimates that reducing 911 response times by one minute could save 10,000 lives a year in the United States.

The end goal is to have all the centers interconnected for better communication. Seven states have started the move to NG911, including California, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont. If your state isn't listed here, consider contacting your representatives. The video below gives more information on NG911.