

Help Us Help You: Your Guide to Calling 9-1-1 Emergency Services



To best respond to an emergency situation, call takers, dispatchers and first responders need your help. Familiarize yourself and those living or visiting your home with the following tips to ensure that the 9-1-1 call taker will be able to process your emergency call efficiently and send assistance as quickly as possible.

This information is a public service of The National 9-1-1 Education Coalition and YAMHILL COMMUNICATIONS.

9-1-1 NEEDS TO KNOW WHERE TO GO

- When calling 9-1-1, one of the first things you'll be asked to provide is the location of the emergency you're reporting.
- The call taker may not automatically know your location or may ask you to confirm it.
- Make sure you provide as much detail on your location as possible, such as landmarks, cross streets and mileposts.

KNOW YOUR CELL WELL

- The current 9-1-1 system is designed for voice communications only.
- Texting 9-1-1 is not an option in most locales; you must dial 9-1-1 and speak with a call taker.
- Pull over when driving, if possible. This reduces the chance of a dropped call.
- Lock your keypad when you're not using your phone, so 9-1-1 isn't dialed by mistake. For the same reason, don't put 9-1-1 on speed dial.
- Do not give old phones to children as toys. A wireless phone with no active service can still call 9-1-1.
- If you accidentally call 9-1-1, stay on the line and tell the call taker that you do not have an emergency.
- Calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone is always free and it is never necessary to dial an area code.

9-1-1 IS FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY

- Call 9-1-1 for emergencies only. It is appropriate to call 9-1-1 when you need to save a life, stop a crime or report a fire.
- 9-1-1 is the right number to call in an emergency when a prompt response is needed.
- If you are not sure you have an emergency to report, call 9-1-1 and let the call taker decide.

KNOW HOW TO USE 9-1-1 WITH THE PHONE YOU OWN

- Before you need help in an emergency, be sure to understand how the type of phone you use affects your call to 9-1-1. It is important to know the capabilities of the device you are using (landline, cellular, VoIP).
- Cell phones and VoIP phones may not automatically tell 9-1-1 where you are, so be prepared to provide detailed information about your location.

REMAIN CALM, BE PREPARED

- Try to stay calm, give information and follow all instructions.
- Professional call-takers are trained to get information from you. Listen carefully and answer as concisely as possible.
- Remember that even if the dispatcher is still asking questions or giving instructions, help is on the way.

HELP 9-1-1 HELP YOU

- The more you know what to expect when you call 9-1-1, the faster 9-1-1 can get you the help you need.
- You can save a life! Follow all instructions the 9-1-1 call taker gives you, and don't hang up until the call taker does. If you get cut off, call back and explain that you were cut off.

WHAT TO DO WHEN 9-1-1 DOESN'T WORK

- If you call 9-1-1 from your landline and receive a 'fast busy' tone—first try calling 9-1-1 using your cell phone;
- If you are still unable to reach 9-1-1, for the areas served by the Yamhill Communications Agency, hang up and dial the non-emergency number: 503.434.6500