



# 9-1-1 HELP US HELP YOU

## What PARENTS need to know

Parents can do many things to keep their family safe. Teaching children how to use 9-1-1 properly at an early age is not difficult – and may save a life. Here are some tips on how to prepare your home and your children to get help from 9-1-1 in an emergency.

### TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO DESCRIBE THEIR LOCATION

The most important information anyone can provide to a 9-1-1 operator is their location. Teach your children to be aware of their surroundings and to give as many details as possible about their location if an emergency happens when they're away from home. Providing the address is ideal, but if they are outside and don't know the street address, looking for cross streets or landmarks can help. If they're in a building with different levels, teach them to let the 9-1-1 operator know what floor, apartment, or office number they are calling from.

### POST YOUR ADDRESS IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS

Make sure your address is visible on your driveway or curb and on the house itself. That leaves no doubt that first responders are at the correct location. Be certain that the numbers and letters are visible both day and night from every direction. Your city may have ordinances for proper house number posting, so check with local authorities for more information.

### REPORT MISSING STREET SIGNS ASAP

Proper signage can be crucial in an emergency situation when responders are trying to find your home. Report any damaged or missing street signs to your city or county for repair.

### DON'T LET CHILDREN PLAY WITH OLD CELL PHONES

Many people aren't aware that even old, deactivated cell phones with no service plan may be able to call 9-1-1. An old cell phone may seem like a great toy, but letting a child play with it can cause problems. Consider donating unwanted wireless devices to a charity that recycles them.

### KNOW YOUR FAMILY'S DEVICES

You can reach 9-1-1 on most devices that can make phone calls. However, the information that the 9-1-1 operator receives can vary, depending on where you are and what device you're using. Telecommunications companies are working to make sure 9-1-1 works everywhere from every device. But you must know the abilities and limitations of the devices your family could use to call 9-1-1. Check with your service provider for more information.

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## TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT 9-1-1

Help your children learn the right way to use 9-1-1. Teach them to call 9-1-1 when they need help or see someone who needs help right away. Explain what is and is not an emergency and that they should only call when they need a police officer, a firefighter, or a doctor.

## HELP YOUR CHILDREN MEMORIZE USEFUL INFORMATION

Your children need to learn their full names, parents' full names, their address, and their phone number to provide the 9-1-1 operator with information needed to send help quickly. Review often to make sure they know it by memory. The more automatically they can provide information to the 9-1-1 operator, the faster help will arrive.

## TEACH MORE AS YOUR CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO LEARN MORE

As your children grow up, they can retain more information that will help the 9-1-1 operator understand the emergency. In addition, 9-1-1 technology is changing quickly. Keep up with the features and capabilities of the 9-1-1 system and help your children keep up, too. Knowing how to use 9-1-1 properly in an emergency can save lives.

## PREPARE EVERYONE TO STAY CALM AND ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Emergencies are scary at any age – especially for children who may be dialing 9-1-1 for the first time. Let them know how important it is to try not to panic, yell, or cry, as the 9-1-1 operator may be unable to understand what they're saying. They should also be prepared to provide all information requested. The better they're able to keep their composure and answer questions, the faster the 9-1-1 operator can send help.

## TELL YOUR CHILDREN TO STAY ON THE LINE

Let your children know that when they dial 9-1-1, they should stay on the line until they talk to the operator, if it is safe to do so – even if they dialed by accident or the crisis is over. Otherwise, the 9-1-1 operator will assume that they are unable to speak for some reason and may call back or send help regardless, taking time and resources away from those who need emergency assistance. Waiting for the operator to tell them to disconnect is the best way to avoid a misunderstanding. Let them know that many times, help is on the way while callers are still on the phone; staying on the line will not prevent the 9-1-1 operator from sending help.



**FOR MORE TIPS AND INFORMATION ON  
DIALING 9-1-1, VISIT [WWW.DENCO.ORG](http://WWW.DENCO.ORG).**