



9-1-1 HELP US HELP YOU

What TEENS Need to Know

You probably have a good idea of how to use 9-1-1. But understanding exactly what will happen when you call can save valuable time and get help to you faster. Here's what you need to know.

KNOW YOUR LOCATION

The most important thing that the 9-1-1 operator needs to know is exactly where you are. If you're outside and don't know the address, find landmarks or cross streets. If you're in an office or a multi-level building, tell the operator what floor or office number you're calling from. Even if the 9-1-1 center can track your call, wouldn't you rather be sure they send help to the right place?



FOR MORE TIPS AND INFORMATION ON
DIALING 9-1-1, VISIT WWW.DENCO.ORG.

WHEN TO CALL 9-1-1

The only time to call 9-1-1 is in an emergency. Call when you or someone with you is hurt or in danger, or if you need the police, the fire department, or medical help right away. If you aren't sure if the situation is an emergency, the safe thing to do is call and let the 9-1-1 operator decide.

WHEN NOT TO CALL 9-1-1

Do not call 9-1-1 for routine informational purposes. Some things that you may consider an emergency, like wanting to know if schools are closed or why traffic on the freeway isn't moving, are not public safety issues. Calling 9-1-1 in non-emergencies wastes resources and ties up the lines for people trying to get help in a genuine crisis.

DO NOT MAKE PRANK CALLS TO 9-1-1

You may think prank calling 9-1-1 or sending the police to a friend's house is a great joke. Actually, it's a crime – one with a hefty fine attached. Intentional misuse of 9-1-1 service is a Class B misdemeanor in Texas. And don't think you'll get away with it, since the 9-1-1 center can see your number and location. You also will be taking resources away from people who need emergency help.

CALL FIRST; TEXT AS A LAST RESORT

You may have heard that texting 9-1-1 is now possible in many North Texas areas – but it should never be your first choice. Messages may be delayed or delivered out of order, and there are many more limitations that could prevent emergency help from arriving as quickly as possible – or arriving at all. Never text 9-1-1 if you are able to safely make a voice call.

STAY COOL

You are the only link between the emergency situation and 9-1-1. You probably will be scared, but try not to panic, yell, or cry, as the 9-1-1 operator may not be able to understand you. Explain what's happening and answer questions as calmly as you can, so the operator can get the right help to you quickly.

DO NOT HANG UP

Once you call 9-1-1, stay on the line until you talk to an operator. The situation may seem to be resolved, or you may have dialed 9-1-1 by mistake, but you need to let the 9-1-1 operator know that. Otherwise, the 9-1-1 operator assumes that something is very wrong and will try to call you back or send help anyway. That takes time and resources away from people who need immediate help. Wait until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to disconnect to avoid a misunderstanding. Staying on the line won't prevent the operator from sending help.