

When to Call 911

- When you see or smell smoke or your smoke alarm goes off
- For a crime in progress or one that has just occurred
- For a life threatening medical emergency such as a heart attack, severe injuries, choking, fainting, broken bones, head injuries etc...
- Unexplained seizures or convulsions
- Sudden dizziness, weakness, or change in vision
- Mental change (such as confusion, unusual behavior, difficulty walking or speaking)
- Unexplained severe headache
- Sudden or intense pain
- Bleeding that won't stop
- Severe vaginal bleeding
- Coughing up or vomiting blood
- Suicidal or homicidal feelings
- Choking
- Severe burns
- Allergic reaction
- Trauma (injury)
- Hypothermia or abnormally low body temperature
- Heat stress or exhaustion
- Motor vehicle accident injury
- Industrial accident
- Drug overdose or poisoning
- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Unresponsiveness when talked to or touched
- Drowning
- Neck or back injury

Things to remember when calling 911

1. It's important to take a deep breath and not get excited. Any situation that requires 911 is, by definition, an emergency. The dispatcher or call-taker knows that and will try to move things along quickly, but under control. Know the location of the emergency and the number you are calling from. This may be asked and answered a couple of times but don't get frustrated. Even though many 911 centers have enhanced capabilities -- meaning they are able to see your location on the computer screen -- they are still required to confirm the information. If for some reason you are disconnected, at least

- emergency crews will know where to go and how to call you back. As the call progresses, you will hear clicking - do not hang up!
2. Wait for the call-taker to ask questions, then answer clearly and calmly. If you are in danger of assault, the dispatcher or call-taker will still need you to answer quietly, mostly "yes" and "no" questions.
 3. If you reach a recording, listen to what it says. If the recording says your call cannot be completed, hang up and try again. If the recording says all call-takers are busy, *wait!* When the next call-taker or dispatcher is available to take the call, it will transfer you.
 4. Let the call-taker guide the conversation. He or she is typing the information into a computer and may seem to be taking forever. There's a good chance, however, that emergency services are already being sent while you are still on the line.
 5. Follow all directions. In some cases, the call-taker will give you directions. Listen carefully, follow each step exactly, and *ask for clarification* if you don't understand.
 6. Keep your eyes open. You may be asked to describe victims, suspects, vehicles, or other parts of the scene.
 7. Do not hang up the call until directed to do so by the call-taker.

Tips:

1. No matter what happens - *Stay Calm*
2. Never program 911 into your automatic dialer (phone memory). You're not going to forget the number and accidental 911 calls are more likely with auto-dialers. If someone calls 911 and doesn't speak, emergency services must still be dispatched.

How to Call 911 from a Cellphone

Location, Location, Location

When you call 911 from a cell phone, the call often lands in a regional center. To get help to you, there are two pieces of information the call-taker needs to know *immediately*:

1. Tell the call-taker the address and city you're calling from.
2. Tell the call-taker what *type of emergency* you have.

All landline or home phone calls as well as 911 cellphone calls come to the Pinellas County 911 Center which is located in Clearwater.

Any Phone Will Do

Wireless carriers are required to complete 911 calls, even when the phone is not activated. Any phone that turns on and can receive a signal is capable of making a 911 call.

The problem is: if the phone you're using isn't activated, there isn't a phone number assigned to it. That means if you're disconnected from the dispatch center, you *must* call 911 back. They will not have a way to call you.

Stay calm be clear

Professional call-takers are trained to get information from you. They're staring at a computer screen that has all the relevant questions. Listen carefully, and answer as concisely as possible.

Remember, responders can only respond if they know where they're going. Make sure you get the location as detailed as possible.

Do not call 911 for Non-Emergencies

Unfortunately, not every call to 911 is an emergency. Some callers are seeking information rather than help. Others are simply abusing the system. In fact, in every state, it's illegal to call 911 without an emergency.

You Should NOT Call 911 for the following:

1. Testing to See if the Phone Works. 911 will always be answered, but that doesn't mean it should be called. If you receive a cell phone do not call 9-1-1 to see if it is working. These calls take up valuable communication lines and may block emergency calls from making it to a dispatcher.
2. Getting the Number for the Police Department. When callers need a non-emergency number for police, fire, or ambulance, they should call 411, not 911. Any time a caller feels his or her life is in danger, he or she should call 911 - otherwise, use a non-emergency number.
3. To Ask the Police-Fire-Ambulance Agency a Question. If a caller is not in need of assistance immediately, 911 is probably the wrong number to call. When calling to ask a question and not to request immediate assistance, call the department's non-emergency number.
4. Teaching Kids to Call 911. While it is extremely important to teach kids to call 911, it's a really bad idea to actually have them do it when there is no emergency. Kids learn by example. If mom and dad seem to think it's OK to call 911 just to practice, then they will, too.
5. To Get a Cat Out of a Tree. Calling for help with animals in distress is perfectly fine - just don't call 911. Only call 911 regarding animals if the animal is endangering humans. 911 is intended for human emergencies only, all calls to request assistance for animals lost or in distress should go to an agency's non-emergency number.