

MAKING **9-1-1** WORK FOR YOU

How It Works

When you dial 911 from your home or business in Tama County, all calls go to one central public safety answering point equipped to send Law Enforcement, Fire and Emergency Medical Services to the location you need them.

In most cases, the Enhanced 911 system provides the 911 call taker information, to include residence or business name, address and telephone number of the origin of the call. The 911 call taker asks specific questions to clarify the nature and location of your situation. This information is relayed to enable the emergency responder to provide the best quality assistance while helping to ensure both responder safety and caller safety until emergency personnel arrives on location.

What is the major benefit of the 9-1-1 System?

The time saved by the use of an easy to remember, common number is the major benefit. Also, in most cases, Enhanced 911 receives the home number and location from which a call is placed, saving valuable time crucial to successful emergency service response.

Know **WHEN** to call 9-1-1

- To stop a crime
- To report a fire
- To save a life
- Any time an emergency response is required by Law Enforcement, Fire or Medical personnel

Know **WHEN NOT** to call 9-1-1

Don't call 9-1-1 to get road conditions, weather conditions, have questions about licenses or permits, to look up a phone number for you. If you have a power failure at your home, please call your utility company, NOT 9-1-1

TIPS WHEN CALLING 9-1-1

- **WHERE** did this happen?
- **WHAT** happened?
- **WHEN** did this happen? Is the event still in progress?
- **Telephone number you are calling from**
- **Your name**

An exact street address is best. Look at numbers posted on buildings around you. View the street signs to provide hundred-block or intersection information.

If you are driving, be aware of the road or highway on which you are traveling. Look for landmarks or businesses that are very near to your location.

STAY AS CALM AS YOU CAN

Remain calm and patient. Take a deep breath before speaking. Time seems to slow down when you are in an emergency. Your cooperation is essential to quickly getting help started your way.

Briefly state the nature of the call. "I need to report a fire..." Or "I need to report a break-in at my home".



STAY ON THE LINE IF YOU CAN

Stay on the line until the 9-1-1 call taker tells you they have the information they need. In some instances, they will ask if you can stay on the phone with them until officers arrive. This is to gather additional information if the situation changes before officers arrive.

If it is not safe for you to stay on the phone, let the call taker know this immediately.

Keep in mind that the call taker can dispatch emergency responders to your location without disconnecting from the call, so, until you are instructed to do otherwise, make sure to stay on the line so that you can provide any necessary information or assistance to the 9-1-1 operator.

If you misdial and accidentally call 9-1-1, **DO NOT** hang up! Wait until your call is answered and explain that you misdialled.

LET THE 9-1-1 CALLTAKER ASK THE QUESTIONS

Even if the call taker's questions seem unrelated or repetitious, let the call taker lead the conversation and answer their questions. Call takers are trained to gather information in a certain order to quickly assess the situation and decide what assistance is best to help you. They may need to clarify a previous answer, or may already be aware of the situation you are reporting and need to find out if you have any additional information.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT 9-1-1

Teach your children what 9-1-1 is and when it is okay to call. Let them know that playing with the phone and calling 9-1-1 is a bad idea because it may cause the line to be tied up and someone who is really in trouble may not get help as quickly.

CALLING 9-1-1 FROM A CELLULAR

TELEPHONE – If you are dialing 9-1-1 from a wireless phone, your location may not be provided to the emergency operators. Please be prepared to provide your exact location.

Most cell phone calls can be traced to the nearest cell tower, but it is helpful if you can tell the 9-1-1 call taker your specific location. Check for nearby building addresses or street signs, 911 address signs, or highway mile markers. Remember, when using a cellular phone to make your emergency call, your address is not available to the call taker.

Do not leave your cell phone where it can be accessed by children. Do not allow old cell phones to be used as toys; cell phones without a service plan will still dial 9-1-1 (if you do choose to let your child play with an old cell phone, PLEASE REMOVE THE BATTERY!)

USING INTERNET OR BROADBAND (VOIP)

PHONE – If you are dialing 9-1-1 from a non-traditional phone carrier, your location information may not be provided to emergency operators. Please be prepared to provide your exact location. Before signing up for a VoIP/Broadband phone, we encourage you to read all 9-1-1 information so you clearly understand the 9-1-1 capabilities of your service provider.

USING A BUSINESS PHONE EXTENSION

– Remember that your location information may not accurately display from these phones, be prepared to give your exact location inside the building.

DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED – To assist hearing impaired callers, we are equipped with Text Telephone (TTY) machines and each call taker is trained in the use of this equipment. Frequent test calls are done to assure that call takers maintain their TTY skills.

Questions emergency operators may ask you:

What is the race and sex of the subject?

What was the approximate height and weight of the subject?

What is the hair color?

What was the subject wearing?

Did the subject have a moustache, beard, accent, limp, glasses, or anything unusual that might make the subject stand out?

Were weapons present?

When describing a vehicle the call taker may ask for the following information:

Color of the vehicle

Year of the vehicle

Make of the vehicle

Body style (2 door/4 door, etc)

For comments, questions, concerns, suggestions:

www.tamacounty.org

Email rcurrens@ema.tamacounty.org

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SAFETY IN NUMBERS



TAMA COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

**The non-emergency
number is (641) 484-3760**

