

# When should I use 9-1-1?

Use 9-1-1 to stop a crime in progress, report a fire, or call for an ambulance during a medical emergency. 9-1-1 is the right number to call in an emergency when a prompt response is needed. There could be a fight or an assault occurring right now, a fire burning, or a medical problem occurring now which could be life threatening. The person who answers your 9-1-1 call is a trained dispatcher. They will ask you questions to determine what kind of help you need - Fire, Police, or Medical. Be prepared to state the location, nature of the emergency, and please answer all the questions. **Answering questions does not delay response.** As they ask their questions, keep your answers as short and direct as possible.

## Questions could include:

- **What is the location?** (The location is key, help cannot be sent without it)
- What happened?
- Is anyone injured?
- Who is involved?
- Where are you calling from?
- What is your name?
- What is your phone number?
- What is your address?

*Also, be prepared to provide descriptions of the location, suspect(s) and/or vehicle(s) (including license plate if possible) involved in the incident.*

While on the phone with the call taker, EMERGENCY help is being dispatched. Staying on the line, if asked to do so, will NOT delay help from responding units. If it is possible and does not compromise your safety, **do not hang up the phone** until the 9-1-1 call taker says it is okay to hang up.

## What if I call 9-1-1 by mistake?

**Do Not Hang Up!** Please stay on the line if you call 9-1-1 by accident, and tell the dispatcher that everything is OK. If you do not stay on the line we may have to send a deputy or police officer to your home or business to make sure there is not a problem.

## When should I use the non-emergency number?

**(850)638-6111** is a ten digit non-emergency number which you can dial 24 hours a day in Washington County for non-emergency help. Using the non-emergency number keeps 9-1-1 available for true emergencies.

## Some examples of times when you should call (850)638-6111 are:

- Your house or car was broken into yesterday.
- Your runaway child has returned home.
- You need to add additional items to the burglary report you made last week.
- Your car was stolen sometime overnight.
- Someone stole your bike while you were at school.
- To obtain other general information.

Sometimes we receive 9-1-1 calls from someone who just doesn't know who to call, or who can't find the right phone number. People call to get directions, to obtain road or weather conditions, to report a power outage, or because they are having trouble finding a phone number in the phone book. **These are not emergencies** and they are not appropriate for activating the 9-1-1 emergency system.

A quick response in an emergency depends upon each of us using the emergency system properly.