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9-1-1 Basics

What is 9-1-1 and how does it work?

9-1-1 is a nationwide phone number that can be used in an emergency to report serious medical problems, crimes or fires. Calls placed to 9-1-1 in Vermont are answered by call-takers at one of eight Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the state. The call-takers are professionals who have been trained to answer calls and evaluate emergencies. They will do all they can to help you. The call-taker will ask questions to get complete information, and may then forward the call to a dispatcher who will send the appropriate responders to the site of the emergency. Sometimes, the call-taker serves as the dispatcher. In either case, it is important to stay on the line until you are told it's OK to hang up the phone.

When to call 9-1-1

- Call 9-1-1 when help is needed to save a life, stop a crime, or report a fire.

How to call 9-1-1

- "9-1-1" is the phone number.
 - This phone number has only three digits, instead of the usual seven.
- If you accidentally call 9-1-1, stay on the line and tell the call-taker that you do not have an emergency.
 - The call-taker is required to ask questions when an accidental call has been placed.

Know how to use *your* phone

- Before you need help in an emergency, be sure to understand how to use your phone to place a call.
 - In addition to pushing the numbers 9-1-1, you may have to push a button to turn on the phone, or push a button to connect the call.

What to expect when a 9-1-1 call-taker answers the phone

- The call-taker will ask you questions about your location and the emergency.
- The dispatcher may also ask you questions.
- The call-taker may offer instructions to assist you with the emergency until help arrives.
- Be patient, remain calm, answer all questions, and stay on the phone until you're told it's ok to hang up.
 - Keep in mind that help may be on the way even though you are still on the phone.

Emergency responders need to know where to go

- When you call 9-1-1, the call-taker will ask you to provide the location of the emergency you're reporting.
 - Be prepared to provide the complete address, or to describe landmarks such as nearby businesses or mile markers.
 - Learn to be aware of your surroundings, especially when traveling or in an unfamiliar area.

- Knowing your location is especially important when calling from a cell phone.
 - Your location may *not* be available to the call-taker!
- All **land line** phones have an address associated with them.
 - This address will be displayed on the call-taker's computer monitor.
 - The call-taker will ask you to confirm the location.

9-1-1 needs to know what kind of emergency you have

- The call-taker will ask a number of questions to understand the emergency and what is happening at the time you place your call.
 - Your answers will help make sure the appropriate responders, (firefighters, police, medical), get to the right place and are properly prepared for the emergency.
 - The call-takers need specific information to ensure the safety of the responders.

Help the Emergency Responders help you

- Make sure your house and/or mailbox are clearly numbered with the correct address.
 - Use reflective numbers so they will be visible at night.
- Secure your pets so they don't get in the way.
- Turn on outside lights if it's dark.
- Maintain a list of medications taken by everyone in the household, and be prepared to give it to the responders in case of a medical emergency.

Help 9-1-1 help you

- Knowing when to call and what to expect when you phone 9-1-1 can help reduce fear and feelings of helplessness in an emergency.
 - In an emergency, seconds matter, so being knowledgeable and prepared can make all the difference.
- Stay calm, listen carefully, give information and follow all instructions.
- Remember, 9-1-1 is for emergencies.
 - Calling 9-1-1 for a non-emergency matter ties up the call-taker who could be needed for a true emergency.
 - The phone number for local law enforcement is located in the white pages of the phone book, under the listing for the town or city.

For more information

- <http://e911.vermont.gov/>
- 802-828-4911 / 800-342-4911 (Vermont only)

--Call 9-1-1 to save a life, stop a crime, report a fire --