

Hints and Tips for Calling 9-1-1

• Reasons for Dialing 9-1-1

When: a crime is in progress.

When: you or someone else is in danger.

When: you need an ambulance.

When: you need a fire truck.

• Calling 9-1-1 is not for reasons such as:

When: there is a power outage.

When: you want to find out if someone has been arrested or is in jail.

When: you want to know what time it is.

When: you are looking for general information or a phone number.

When: you are curious why there is a police officer or ambulance at your neighbor's house or in your neighborhood.



- Those who are hard of hearing and/or speech impaired can call 9-1-1 using TDD
- If 9-1-1 is dialed by accident, stay on the line and advise the operator that the number has been dialed by mistake. Police officers are dispatched to all 9-1-1 calls until the operator can verify that there is not an emergency.
- When teaching children to dial 9-1-1, do not refer to the number as 9-11 (nine eleven). There is no 11 (eleven) button on the dialing pad and this can cause confusion.
- If possible, have a pen and paper ready when you dial 9-1-1. Your complaint might be one that must be referred to another department or agency.

When you call 9-1-1

- Allow the operator to ask the necessary questions. 9-1-1 operators are trained to ask particular questions according to the nature of the incoming call. These questions will not delay the emergency personnel from being sent to your location. While the operator is asking the caller questions, there is another dispatcher in the same room sending the appropriate emergency response when the incoming call is an emergency call.
- When you are calling 9-1-1 for crime or incident in-progress, if at all possible stay on the line with the operator, unless doing so will place you in danger. Do not say "send the police" and hang up. Staying on the line and answering questions as the crime/incident progresses will allow the operator to give the responding emergency personnel updated information as they are enroute to the location.
- Be prepared to describe the persons involved in any incident. This includes their race, sex, age, height and weight, hair color, clothing description, and if they had a hat, glasses or facial hair. Be prepared to describe any vehicles involved in the incident. This includes the color, year, make, model and type of vehicle (sedan, pick-up, SUV, van, tanker truck, flatbed, etc.), and which way the vehicle is going.
- All 9-1-1 calls are prioritized and the most serious are dispatched first. Calls are not dispatched on a first-come/first-serve basis.



Cellular Phone Users and 9-1-1



- Cellular phone users should read your cell phone manual and learn how to lock your cell phone keypad. Locking the keypad will prevent the numbers on your cell phone from being depressed while in your pocket or purse. Most cell phones will dial 9-1-1 when any button on the keypad becomes depressed and held. Locking the keypad can prevent many unnecessary false calls to 9-1-1.
- When calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone, be prepared to give the operator your location. Enhanced 9-1-1 is currently not capable of giving the location you are calling from and the caller will have to provide this information. Visible landmarks, nearby businesses, and highway/interstate mile markers can be good tools for pinpointing your location.

The 6 W's To Remember When Calling 911

Where is this occurring? At your location or somewhere else?

What is happening?

When - is this occurring now?

Who is involved? (who is the suspect and/or victim)

Why is this happening?

Weapons - Are there any involved and what kind?

Information about your local 9-1-1 Center:

The Somerset County 9-1-1 Communications Center is manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing dispatch service to any non-profit public safety agency servicing Somerset County. Presently, the Center employs 14 full-time dispatchers, a 911 coordinator, 1 full-time addressing/TAC, officer and 3 part-time dispatchers.



Somerset County Control was founded in 1972, primarily to dispatch municipal police agencies in Somerset County. In January, 1977, the Dispatch Center was expanded to dispatch 22 of the county's 29 fire departments. In January, 1980, the Dispatch Center began dispatching many of the county's emergency ambulance services, and at present is dispatching all 13 ambulance services, along with 4 advanced life support services. Today, 2007, there are 22 police agencies, 29 fire departments, 12 EMS departments and 1 Search and Rescue Team.

The first Dispatch Center was in the office of the old Somerset County Jail, adjacent to the Somerset County Courthouse. In April, 1982, a new jail was constructed on East Fairview Street, in Somerset Borough, which included an office section for a new Communications Center. The Communications Center for Somerset County Control remained at this location until October, 1990. On October 30, 1990, the Communications Center for Somerset County Control was moved to a remodeled facility in the basement of the Somerset County Courthouse. In June of 2002 we moved to our current new location located in the former Klatzkin Building on East Union St. The new facility has three floors with the communications center on the third floor.

Remember, in an emergency call 9-1-1.

Somerset County
Department of Emergency Services EMA/911
100 E. Union Street
Somerset, Pa 15501

Somerset County EMA/911



Informational Brochure

Somerset County
Department of Emergency Services EMA/911
100 E. Union Street
Somerset, Pa 15501
814-445-1525 (Non-Emergency 911 Center)
814-445-1515 (Emergency Management Agency)
814-445-1531 (9-1-1 Addressing)
www.co.somerset.pa.us/911/