

Report an Emergency

To report any emergency, the first thing you should do is dial 9-1-1.

What is 9-1-1?

9-1-1 is the number utilized in North America to report an emergency. Although it is in wide use, it is by no means universal. Rural areas may still utilize seven digit numbers for the police department, fire department, and ambulance services. Check the inside cover of your telephone directory for numbers valid in your area.

When should I call 9-1-1?

You should call 9-1-1 anytime you have an immediate need for the police, sheriff, an ambulance or the fire department. If you are not sure if an emergency exists, it is best to be on the safe side and call.

When should I not call 9-1-1?

Don't call 9-1-1 for minor incidents like parking problems or barking dogs. The emergency number should also not be used to ask for information on weather, time, school closings, or for legal advice. You should also not call 9-1-1 to report power outages, unless the condition that caused the outage (like a car running into a telephone pole) is an emergency.

What about cell phones?

Although they are a valuable tool, cell phones have their limitations. Your community must support wireless 9-1-1 calls. (Some limited access highways have alternate numbers posted for assistance.) Cell phones must be within range of a tower to operate, and your call may not be routed to the appropriate agency. Since cell phones do not provide the 9-1-1 center with a location (and location is the single most critical piece of information), it is important for you to know where you are. If you are using a non-activated cell phone, the tele communicator cannot call you back if your connection is lost.

What information will I be asked?

The minimum you will need to provide is the exact location and nature of the emergency. You may also be asked your name, telephone number, and additional data concerning the call. This varies from case to case. Remember not to hang up until told to do so. If it all possible, get to safety before calling 9-1-1. (Example: If your house is on fire, alert your family, escape, and call from a neighbors.) Some, but not all, communities provide pre-arrival instructions, especially on medical calls. Orland Central 9-1-1 does. Pay close attention to the directions given.

Can kids Use 9-1-1?

Absolutely! Children as young as three years old have successfully used 9-1-1. Teach your children that calling 9-1-1 is not a joke. Prepare them for calling. Make sure they know their address and phone number. (Even if this information is provided automatically, it's still good to know!) If they are capable of understanding, teach them the differences in how to dial cell phones and rotary dial phones if they will be exposed

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to these devices. And, make sure your child can reach a phone at home without dangerous climbing.

If I am deaf, can I use 9-1-1?

Yes, you can. In fact, by Federal Law access to 9-1-1 must be provided to the deaf and hearing impaired. Devices such as the TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) or the TTY (TeleTYpewriter) allow for printed conversations over phone lines. Although it is not required, hitting the spacebar after connecting to 9-1-1 can help to more quickly alert the tele communicator that a TDD call is in progress.

What else do I need to know?

There are many common sense rules to remember, like not having all cordless or ISDN phones, because they won't work if your power fails. Also, don't program 9-1-1 on a speed dial on any of your telephones, but especially not on cellular because it can easily be dialed accidentally, and tie up valuable resources.