

What Happens When I Call 9-1-1?

Your 9-1-1 call will be routed to the Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). This is normally the law enforcement agency serving the area.

You will be asked to provide your location (you need to know this) and what type of emergency you are reporting.

If it is a fire or medical emergency you may be transferred to the Fire/Emergency Medical dispatch center that serves the area where you are located.

The Fire/EMS call taker does not always know where you are located you will need to provide your address again. If you are calling on a cell phone the dispatch center does not receive accurate location information from your phone so you will be asked to verify it one more time to ensure accuracy. It is not uncommon for people who are in a stressful situation to give an incorrect location the first time they are asked.

Once the address and situation has been verified the call is entered to be dispatched. The dispatcher (a different person in the dispatch center from the call taker you are speaking with) will transmit the call to the closest appropriate fire department units.

The call-taker will remain on the call with the caller to get additional information and provide instructions.

THIS PROCESS DOES NOT DELAY THE RESPONSE. If the caller is reporting a fire the call taker will instruct the caller to get out of the structure and to keep away from the fire. If the caller is reporting a medical emergency the call taker will ask a series of questions to determine what type and the seriousness of the situation.

Depending on the nature of the medical emergency the call-taker will provide instructions to the caller. These may include life-saving instructions such as CPR, control of bleeding, helping a person who is choking, childbirth instructions etc. Instructions may also include practical things like turning on a porch light, having someone out to guide the responders, unlocking the door, putting pets outside, gathering medications etc.

THIS PROCESS DOES NOT DELAY THE RESPONSE.

Depending on the call volume in the dispatch center the call taker may remain on the phone with the caller until units arrive on scene. If the call taker disconnects they will instruct the caller to call back if the situation worsens.

Why do you ask me so many questions?

The questions provide vital information about the situation that informs the call taker if they should provide potentially life-saving instructions prior to the arrival of responding units.

The information is also transmitted to responding units to advise them of the situation so they can make important decisions before arrival (like requesting additional resources or cancelling them if the situation is not critical).