911: Know When to Call and Be Prepared

If you are experiencing a medical, fire, police, or other emergency, call 911.

You are not bothering us. Emergency dispatchers are trained to gather information, provide instructions, and send the appropriate help. There is no need to feel embarrassed or ashamed about calling 911 when you need emergency assistance.

If you are able, call 911 yourself rather than having someone call on your behalf. Speaking directly with the dispatcher lets you provide accurate information about your situation and receive instructions while help is on the way.

The dispatcher may ask several questions. Stay on the line and answer them as best you can. These questions help determine what assistance is needed and allow responders to prepare while they are on the way.

If you would like a family member, friend, or caregiver notified, let the dispatcher know. You can also contact them after you have provided the dispatcher with the information needed to send help.

Know Your Location

If you need to call 911 while away from home, be prepared to tell the dispatcher where you are. Provide the address, apartment or room number, intersection, road name, business name, or nearby landmarks that can help responders locate you.

When calling from a mobile phone, *do not assume the dispatcher automatically knows your exact location*. Always provide your location if you can and follow the dispatcher's instructions.

Help Us Find You

Make sure your home or business has clearly visible address numbers that can be seen from the street. If it is dark and you can do so safely, turn on your exterior lights.

If you are unable to unlock your door during an emergency, responders may need to force entry. Consider planning for emergency access by providing a key to a trusted neighbor, family member, or caregiver, or by using an appropriate emergency-access solution. Do not leave a key in an unsecured or obvious hiding place.

Keep Important Medical Information Available

Visit the Oneida County Sheriff's website for information and a free Yellow Dot kit that will help you provide life-saving information to responders. https://nysheriffs.org/yellowdot/

Maintain a current list of important medical information, including:

Full name and date of birth

Medical conditions

Allergies

Medications, including dosages and how often they are taken

Emergency contacts

Primary healthcare provider and contact information, if available

Keep a copy in a clearly visible location where emergency responders can find it quickly. The freezer is one commonly used location. Keep another copy with you when you are away from home.

A medical ID bracelet, necklace, or wallet card may also be helpful, particularly if you have significant allergies or medical conditions or take important medications.

When in Doubt About an Emergency

If you believe you are experiencing a life-threatening or serious emergency, call 911 without delay.

Calling 911 when you need emergency assistance is not a burden. Our job is to help you and get the right resources to you as quickly as possible.

Taking a few minutes to prepare now—knowing your address, keeping important medical information available, and making sure your home can be accessed in an emergency—can make a significant difference when every second matters.

For questions about local 911 services or emergency preparedness, contact your local emergency services agency, fire department, police department, or emergency medical services agency.