



## Why 911 Telecommunicators Ask Questions

**911 is for reporting Emergencies.** You should always call 911 if life or property is in immediate danger. If you are not sure if you should call, always err on the side of caution and call. Do not call 911 for general inquiries or to report non-emergencies as this could potentially delay a real emergency.

The 911 Telecommunicator that takes your call will need to ask some questions in order to ensure the proper help gets to where it is needed. The Telecommunicators must ask questions for 3 main reasons:

1. Ensure help is sent to the correct location.
2. Ensure the correct help is sent.
3. Provide information to the responders for their own safety.

Secondarily, information that is obtained can help in catching a criminal or could potentially make a difference in whether a criminal is found guilty or not. A caller that remains calm and answers the questions can save time. Some of the standard questions that may be asked:

**Where?** Knowing where to send help is the most important piece of information the Telecommunicator needs. Without an accurate location, arrival of help will be delayed. Some information that is normally asked for:

- Apartment Building Names and Apartment numbers, or if an upper or lower unit.
- Subdivision Names
- Lot Numbers

Current technology may provide an address or a general area, but Telecommunicators will still ask to verify a location. This is needed to ensure that the information being provided by the 911 system is accurate.

**What/Why?** What is the problem, or what kind of assistance is the caller looking for? With this information the Telecommunicator can determine what resources need to be dispatched.

**When?** Is it happening now? This information will help in determining the priority of the call and if it should be dispatched before other calls.

**Who?** Depending on the type of call the Telecommunicator will be looking for some information on who is involved, this could include the following:

- Names
- Descriptions
- Vehicle Descriptions
- Are there weapons present?
- Is anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol?

**Injuries?** If someone is injured or ill, the Telecommunicator will ask a series of questions specifically related to the type of injury or illness, including the following:

- Age, sex of patient
- Is the person conscious?
- Are they breathing normally?

Additional questions will be asked based on the medical emergency; the answers to these questions will determine the appropriate response by the Fire Department and determine what instructions will be given to the caller before help arrives.

**Phone Number?** Obtaining a callback phone number is important in case the call is disconnected, or if responding units are unable to locate the problem.

If you have to call for help, the Telecommunicator you are talking to on the phone may not be the same person that is dispatching the responding units to your location. The 911 center uses a computer system that allows your information to be shared between the person talking to you on the phone and the person dispatching the responding units on the radio. This saves time and allows for units to be dispatched while you are on the phone still giving information.

We ask that callers provide the information when asked for in a clear, precise manner. This will help us get you the help you need, as fast as possible.