MAKING 9-1-1 WORK FOR YOU!

THINGS **TEENS** NEED TO KNOW

An informed caller is 9-1-1's best caller. It's important that you know how to help 9-1-1 help you. In an emergency, seconds matter, so being knowledgeable and prepared can make all the difference. Here's what you can do:

Know WHEN to call 9-1-1. 9-1-1 is for emergencies only. You should only be dialing 9-1-1 if someone is hurt or in danger, or if you are in immediate need of police, fire, or medical assistance. If you aren't sure if your situation is an emergency, you should err on the side of safety and call 9-1-1 and let the expert who answers your call make the decision whether to send help or not.

Know WHEN NOT to call 9-1-1. Don't call 9-1-1 just because you are late for a date and need help finding the restaurant or because tickets to the movie you want to see are sold out. While these may be emergencies for you, they aren't for public safety. Inappropriate use of the 9-1-1 system wastes resources and ties up the lines at the 9-1-1 center, and nobody wants to be on hold when they are in the middle of a real crisis.

Making prank calls to 9-1-1 is a very bad idea. It may seem like fun to dial a free, easy to remember number like 9-1-1 to tell a joke or have the police sent to someone's house just to "see what happens," but take our word for it: this is not something you should do. First, the 9-1-1 center will know your callback number and your location. Second, you will be using up resources that are needed to help real people in real trouble. And, finally, if you think your parents will be mad when they find out what you have done, just wait until the annoyed 6'4" police officer shows up at your house to inform you that you have committed a crime.

9-1-1 is not as cool as you are. Yet. We know that you do most of your communicating by text message and instant message, but you can NOT text or IM "9-1-1" to reach emergency services. 9-1-1 and telecommunications professionals are busy in the lab trying to make that possible, but for now you will have to make an old fashioned phone call if you want to talk to 9-1-1.

Know where you are. This is probably the most important information you can provide as a 9-1-1 caller, so try to be aware of your surroundings. Make a real effort to be as detailed as possible. If you are outside and don't know the street address, take a look around and try to find landmarks or cross streets. If you are inside a large building or one with multiple levels, you can help emergency services by letting them know which floor you are on, which apartment you are in, etc.

Stay calm. When you are on the phone with 9-1-1, you are their eyes and ears. Even though you may want to, try not to panic. If you are crying or yelling, it can be hard for the 9-1-1 operator to understand you. If you are able to stay strong, pull yourself together, and answer all of the 9-1-1 operator's questions, the faster they can get the right services to your location.

Never hang up. You may have called 9-1-1 by accident, or your situation may have resolved itself, but it is important to let the 9-1-1 operator know this. If you end the call abruptly, the folks at the 9-1-1 center are going to assume that something has gone very wrong and will either call you back or send help anyway. This will take away from the 9-1-1 center's ability to take calls and dispatch services to on-going emergencies, so make sure the 9-1-1 call taker tells you it is ok to disconnect before you hang up. And keep in mind that the call taker can dispatch responders to your location without disconnecting from the call, so, until you are instructed to do otherwise, make sure to hold the line so that you can provide any necessary information or assistance to the 9-1-1 operator.

www.apco911.org
CTIA The Wireless Foundation www.wirelessfoundation.org
9-1-1 EMERGENCY NENA www.nena.org