

When to Call 9-1-1

Not knowing how to respond quickly to an emergency situation is a common mistake that many people make. Delay in seeking help can mean the difference between life and death. Knowing what to do can be lifesaving.

What is an Emergency?

An emergency is any situation that threatens a person's life and/or property and requires immediate attention from police, fire department, or emergency medical service. If you are not sure whether a problem requires immediate response, always consider it to be more serious than less serious.

Examples of medical emergencies that call for immediate help:

- Sudden weakness on one side of the body, confusion, and/or inability to speak
- Sudden or severe chest or abdominal pain
- Prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing or NOT breathing
- Choking
- Loss of consciousness
- Head, eye, neck, or back injuries
- Broken bones or dislocated joints
- Deep cuts with heavy bleeding
- Severe burns
- Severe headaches

What to Do in case of a Medical Emergency

If there is time to spare, call your primary care physician for advice and see whether the condition is truly an emergency. However, if the physician is unavailable and you feel that the person's condition is growing worse, call 9-1-1 immediately or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

What to Say after you dial 9-1-1

Give your name, phone number, and location. Describe the nature of the emergency - what happened and the victim's condition.

DO NOT hang up until you are asked to do so. The emergency personnel may have additional questions or instructions for you as to what you should do until help arrives.

Dealing with a medical emergency is not an easy task. Try to remain calm and act quickly. By knowing when to call 9-1-1 for assistance, you can help save a life.