

What else should I know about 9-1-1 and my wireless phone?

Safety first. Do not make a call while you are driving. The last thing any one wants is for you to be in an accident while trying to notify 9-1-1 of another emergency.

Do not program your phone to automatically dial 9-1-1. A bump of your phone in a coat or purse could unintentionally send a call to 9-1-1. If your phone is preprogrammed, turn the feature off.

Remember the Phase 2 location that the telecommunicator receives from a wireless phone is within a few hundred feet. The Phase 1 information is within a few miles. While this is better than “somewhere in Chester County” it is not exact. The telecommunicator will need to make certain they know exactly where the emergency is before they tell you to disconnect.

Not all areas throughout the county or even Pennsylvania have the technology to locate wireless callers. Make certain you can provide as much information about the location of the emergency as possible.

It is the person reporting the emergency, not technology, which is the key to getting the appropriate help to the scene. The best way to get accurate location information – from landline or wireless – is for the caller to be able to tell the 9-1-1 telecommunicator the location of the emergency including the

closest street address, municipality and closest intersection

The telecommunicator who answers your call is not the person who will dispatch police, fire or medical personnel. The telecommunicator speaking with you will send the call to a dispatcher while still on the phone and receiving information from you.

If you are at the scene of a medical emergency, the telecommunicator may give you medical instructions to help the patient until an ambulance arrives. In this case it is important to have the phone as close to the patient as possible.

For more information contact:

Department of Emergency Services
601 Westtown Rd, Suite 12
West Chester, PA 19380

610-344-5000

**Chester County
Department
of
Emergency Services**

**Wireless
Enhanced
9-1-1**

**Frequently Asked
Questions**

What is Wireless Enhanced 9-1-1?

When 9-1-1 is dialed from a traditional wireline phone; the telecommunicator receives the number of the calling phone Automatic Number Identification (ANI) and the location of the calling phone Automatic Location Information (ALI). Because wireless phones are not attached to one specific location the location of the call must be determined during the call for assistance. The ability for the telecommunicator to receive the wireless phone number (ANI) and an approximate location of the caller (ALI) is Enhanced Wireless 9-1-1. Wireless 9-1-1 is broken into Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 is when the phone number and the location of the cell tower is received by the telecommunicator. Phase 2 is when the phone number and the approximate location of the caller are received by the telecommunicator.

How do I know my phone will work with the Enhanced 9-1-1 system?

All wireless phones will work at the Phase 1 level. There are times when the caller location cannot be transmitted to the 9-1-1 center. In these cases the telecommunicator will receive Phase 1 information. If your wireless service provider is Cingular, T-Mobile or AT&T then any phone will be compatible with their method of sending your location information to the 9-1-1 center. If your wireless service provider is Nextel, Sprint PCS or Verizon then your phone will need to be equipped with Global Positioning

System (GPS). Phones without GPS will work at the Phase 1 level.

I have called 9-1-1 on an old cell phone without a service contract. Will this work on the enhanced system?

Wireless phones without a service contract (uninitialized phones) will work, but provide limited information to the telecommunicator. Uninitialized phones do not have a phone number so if you are disconnected you cannot be called back. The telecommunicator will receive the cell tower location and in very few instances will receive your approximate location.

What information should I know when calling 9-1-1 from a wireless phone?

Where the emergency is happening. An accurate address or intersection is critical to quickly dispatching the appropriate help. Even landmarks can help the telecommunicator know exactly where to send help.

What is the emergency? The telecommunicator must know what is happening to send the correct assistance.

Don't hang up until your call is answered. Occasionally calls overload the system. Even if you hang-up a telecommunicator will get the information and have to waste time trying to call you back. Stay on the line until a telecommunicator answers.

Don't hang up until the telecommunicator tells you to do so. Typically the call is sent to the dispatcher while the telecommunicator is still on the phone. Even if you are not the first person reporting the incident the telecommunicator may need additional information from you.

If you have my phone number, why do you ask for it?

Like any database the phone number sent during a call to 9-1-1 can be wrong. We ask what your number is to verify that the information we have received is correct. Having the correct call back number is extremely important with wireless calls because of the possibility that the caller will lose signal and be dropped. In these cases the telecommunicator can call back and reestablish contact if needed.

What if the emergency is moving?

As your wireless phone moves the signal is passed from tower to tower. The telecommunicator can direct the system to update the wireless location every few minutes. It is important to remember that each time the system updates either tower or caller location there is a chance that all of the data will not be transmitted and the call will send only the phase 1 (tower) location.