

WHY DO DISPATCHERS ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS?



WHEN SHOULD I CALL 911?

9-1-1 should ONLY be used in emergency situations. An emergency is any situation that requires IMMEDIATE assistance from the police, fire department or ambulance. If you are ever in doubt of whether a situation is an emergency you should call 9-1-1. It is better to be safe and let 9-1-1 personnel determine if you need emergency assistance.

WHY AM I ASKED TO PROVIDE MY ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER IF THE DISPATCHER ALREADY HAS IT ON THE COMPUTER?

The telephone number of every call to 9-1-1 must be confirmed. Enhanced 9-1-1 is a wonderful tool, but life or death situations are much too important to rely on a computer database being 100% accurate. Your address and number will be confirmed every time you connect Oak Lawn Emergency Communications 9-1-1 center to make sure the information is correct. If it is not, the phone company will be notified to update or correct the discrepancy.

Other reasons callers are asked to confirm location and phone number is because the emergency could be in another location. More time is wasted by sending units to the wrong locations. The few additional seconds needed to confirm the information and “get it right” are well spent in obtaining critical information.

WHY DOES THE PERSON WHO ANSWERS THE PHONE ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS INSTEAD OF JUST SENDING HELP?

The dispatchers are trained to ask various questions pertaining to whatever is being reported to help the dispatcher determine what type of units will respond and how they will respond. Asking questions does NOT slow down the response. Usually emergency calls are being dispatched by the police or fire dispatcher while the calltaker is still on the phone with the caller.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE 9-1-1 DISPATCHER?

Remain as calm as possible, listen to the questions, speak clearly and slowly, and listen to all instructions being given by the dispatcher. DON'T HANG UP until the dispatcher tells you it's okay to do so.

