

**April 2011**

## **Emergency Preparedness Pointers**

### **Help 9-1-1 Help You**

Dialing 9-1-1 is the first step in receiving aid in an emergency. Dispatchers stand-by, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week ready to receive your call and direct the appropriate aid to the situation. But they cannot do it alone, the caller plays a key role in getting the right help to the right location. April is National 9-1-1 Education Month, a time for everyone to learn how to help themselves by providing the best possible information to emergency dispatchers.

### **Know What To Expect When You Dial 9-1-1**

Emergency Services Dispatchers are trained to obtain the necessary information about a situation in the most expedient manner; they accurately and concisely record that information, dispatch appropriate emergency response units, and then relay that situational information to those responders. As a caller you should expect to answer the following basic questions:

- ▶ **Where** – is the situation happening – address, building, intersection, etc.
- ▶ **What** – is happening – car crash, house fire, injured subject
- ▶ **Who** – is involved – including how many, calling party involvement, caller's call-back information
- ▶ **When** – did this happen – this can affect the response – something old vs. something in progress

Dispatchers will repeat back the address and phone number, or ask the caller to repeat it, so that they can verify that information. Please be aware that they are required to ask and are only trying to ensure that the appropriate help gets to the correct location as quickly as possible. It is important to stay on the line, remain as calm as possible and allow the dispatcher to direct the conversation. They are trained professionals that are working hard to get you the help you need.



### **9-1-1 And Your Phone**

Modern technology has provided 9-1-1 Dispatch with some amazing tools, but these tools are not always 100% accurate, which is why dispatchers must verify information before they send emergency resources to a location.



**Land Line/Fixed Line:** For many years now, it has been possible to associate an address or location with a specific phone number. The computer age made this tracking almost instantaneous. When you dial 9-1-1 from your home, business or any other fixed phone line the address of where that phone number is registered with the phone carrier appears on the dispatchers screen. This allows the dispatcher to verify location information and quickly begin the response process.

**Cell Phone:** Cell phones brought new challenges to the world of emergency dispatch as these telephone numbers are not permanently tied to a specific location. In recent years, cell phone manufacturers addressed this issue by placing hardware in phones that allow for geo-location. If your phone is two years old or newer it should provide this service. The phone transmits its location with its normal calling signal. When you dial 9-1-1, the dispatcher receives the exact latitude and longitude of the phone. The coordinates are placed on a digital map that will translate them into a street address. Older cell phones do not transmit an exact location, the only information they offer is which cell tower they are currently using. This provides just the general area the call is coming from. Regardless of the information being transmitted by the phone, the dispatcher will confirm the actual location with the caller in order to identify the closest response units available.

**Emergency Mode—** After you have dialed 9-1-1 on your cell phone, it may place itself in “Emergency Mode.” This should prevent any incoming calls or texts other than a return call from dispatch, in case of a dropped call. Contact your service provider for more information on how this feature works on your phone.



Ada City –County Emergency Management  
7200 Barrister Drive ♦ Boise, ID 83704 ♦ (208) 577-4750 ♦ FAX (208) 577-4759  
HOME PAGE: [www.accem.org](http://www.accem.org) ♦ E-MAIL: [pmarusich@adaweb.net](mailto:pmarusich@adaweb.net)

