

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP IN AN EMERGENCY



Knowing how to call for help during a police, fire, or medical emergency can be crucial when life and property are at stake. Being prepared will save valuable time and help prevent panic and disorientation during an urgent situation.

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP IN AN EMERGENCY is a video designed by Syndistar as a community awareness program to teach the basics of being prepared and knowing what to do and say in a life threatening situation or during a crime that is in progress.

The Community Resource Development (CRD) program staff of Virginia Tech feels the video presentation covers four important elements:

- (1) The importance of keeping emergency numbers posted in easy-to-read places;
- (2) What to say and how to report an emergency situation when calling for help;
- (3) How to mark and identify a residence so it can be found quickly; and,
- (4) How to use 911 systems in areas where they are available.

LD
5655
A1162
no. 306-059
VPI
Spec

SUGGESTED USES:

To provide select audiences with accurate, current knowledge of how to call for emergency assistance. To provide an educational program to serve as an introduction piece for audience participation.

RECOMMENDED FOR:

Community and corporate prevention programs, schools, colleges and universities, and 4-H youth programs.

PRODUCERS:

Syndistar, Inc.
125 Mallard Street
St. Rose, LA 70087
(800) 841-9532

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Q. WHY SHOULDN'T YOU RELY ON THE TELEPHONE COMPANY OPERATOR OR INFORMATION WHEN CALLING FOR HELP DURING AN EMERGENCY?**
- A.** Today, phone companies use electric switching; the operator you reach may be in the next city or state.
- Q. WHAT SHOULD YOU FIRST TELL THE EMERGENCY OPERATOR WHO ANSWERS YOUR CALL, AND HOW SHOULD YOU SPEAK?**
- A.** Speak as clearly and calmly as possible, trying to avoid rushing your words. Then tell the operator: (1) who you are; (2) the nature of the problem; and, (3) your exact location. After you relay what and where, let the operator take the lead.
- Q. WHY IS THE ABOVE SEQUENCE IMPORTANT IN RELAYING VITAL INFORMATION?**
- A.** Emergency operators are trained to respond to the problem first. If you give your location first, the operator has to backtrack and valuable seconds can be lost.
- Q. WHY SHOULD YOU LISTEN TO WHAT THE OPERATOR HAS TO SAY AFTER YOU GIVE THIS VITAL INFORMATION?**
- A.** The questions the operator asks are designed to get the most information in the shortest amount of time to the emergency personnel responding to the call.
- Q. WHY SHOULD YOU STAY ON THE LINE UNLESS YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO HANG UP THE RECEIVER?**
- A.** In some cases, the operator may need to continue to relay instructions to you that could be vital to the situation you are facing. In other cases, the operator may still pick up valuable information from background noises if you have to leave the phone.

Q. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO BE PREPARED TO CALL DURING AN EMERGENCY?

A. Post your home address and the phone numbers for police, fire department, and emergency medical services (or 911 if this service is available) where they can be easily read by your children. Let the child practice dialing these numbers to become familiar with the way the operator handles the call. (Let the police, fire, or emergency personnel who answer know that you are training your child.) Teach your child what to say when the call is made.

Q. HOW CAN YOU MAKE SURE THAT EMERGENCY PERSONNEL CAN QUICKLY LOCATE YOUR RESIDENCE?

A. Your house numbers should be clearly visible from the street, day and night. Use numbers made of reflective material that are four to six inches high. Choose colors that contrast with the color of your house. Make sure the numbers on your house are well-lit at night.

Q. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES THAT YOU NOTICE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE POLICE?

A. Even if the incident seems insignificant, your call will give police a chance to investigate what might be a situation that is part of a neighborhood crime pattern. Also, the call could lead to faster apprehension of someone committing a criminal act.

CONCLUSION

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP IN AN EMERGENCY is directed primarily at young people but does have application to all age groups. The video stresses being prepared for a fire or medical emergency. The Community Resource Development program staff realizes that each emergency is different, but does feel there are several basics as presented in the program.

Detailed questions concerning local emergency systems or any form of crime prevention should be directed to your local police or sheriff's department. Please consult your local Extension office for additional crime prevention resources made available by the CRD program.

NOTES:

COMMUNITY RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT



A Public Service Program
of Virginia Tech
and the
Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

James Douglas McAlister
Assistant Director, VCES and
Executive Director, Community
and Economic Development Programs