

9-1-1 PROCEDURES

When should I call 9-1-1?

- To stop a crime
- To report a fire
- To save a life

Anytime an emergency response is required by law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical personnel.

You should call 9-1-1 anytime there is an actual emergency. If you are unsure, call 9-1-1 and the dispatcher will make the final determination.

Please DO NOT call 9-1-1 to report electricity or other utilities are off, to ask for phone numbers for other governmental services, to learn general information or to report a highly visible event like an earthquake if you do not require immediate help. If the 9-1-1 system receives multiple calls at the same time, these calls will be handled on a priority basis with the most serious emergencies handled first. Please be patient if your call is put on hold. **DO NOT HANG UP!**

What should I know about calling 9-1-1 with a cellular phone?

Remember that a cellular phone is really a radio and your call may skip to another, adjacent 9-1-1 center. In this area, your call may actually be answered by a 9-1-1 center in Canada or any of our surrounding counties. PenCom has some limited ability to receive location information but we are a long ways from being able to find callers 100% of the time. You need to be able to:

- Verify your cellular phone number for us.
- Tell us your location. Give a good description of your surrounding including the road you are on, cross streets, direction of travel and landmarks .

Many times, 9-1-1 centers receive clusters of calls from cell phones reporting a traffic accident, structure fire or other highly visible event. If you see emergency vehicles on the scene, please DO NOT call 9-1-1 to find out what is happening.

Many cellular phones are pre-programmed with an emergency button that dials 9-1-1. Even locking the keypad will not disable this feature on some telephone models. 9-1-1 is often dialed by accident many times a day because people are unaware of this feature. We can't get your attention because your phone does not amplify our voice enough over car radios or conversations. Please make sure your phone is in a safe place where it will not be accidentally bumped, crushed, sat on, piled on or otherwise placed where the emergency button can be inadvertently pressed.

Can a hearing or speech impaired caller or a non-English speaking person use 9-1-1?

The answer is YES. For the hearing and/or speech impaired, we have TTY/TDD devices at each telephone position in order to immediately communicate with the caller. Communications personnel have received extensive training through the Washington State 9-1-1/TTY Education Program. For non-English speaking callers, PenCom retains the services of Language Line, a company that provides translators for the 9-1-1 industry for 150 languages 24 hours per day.