

Wireless 9-1-1 Service

POLICE, FIRE, EMERGENCY MEDICAL

The Enhanced 9-1-1 System has been operating in King County since September 4, 1985. Today, approximately 60% of 9-1-1 calls are made from wireless phones. This percentage is expected to continually increase as more people purchase and use wireless phones. For this reason, it is important to understand how 9-1-1 service works for your wireless phone.

WIRELESS 9-1-1 SERVICE

LIMITED LOCATION INFORMATION IS PROVIDED FOR WIRELESS 9-1-1 CALLS. King County has worked with all of the wireless carriers who provide service in the area to implement a system that displays the location of the cell site that received the call and the general area the 9-1-1 call is coming from. **The caller must be able to provide their location to the 9-1-1 center before help can be sent. In many cases, the location of the caller is not accurate enough for the 9-1-1 center to pinpoint exactly where the call is coming from.**

WIRELESS 9-1-1 CALLS ARE ROUTED BASED ON THE CELL SITE THAT RECEIVED THE CALL, NOT BASED ON THE CALLER'S LOCATION. Many times, the 9-1-1 center that answers the call does not provide service to the area where the emergency has occurred, and the call must be transferred.

The phone number of the wireless phone may display at the 9-1-1 center if the phone's owner has subscribed to service from a Wireless Company. If the phone's owner has not subscribed to service, no information will display.

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING USING YOUR WIRELESS PHONE AS YOUR ONLY PHONE AT HOME, CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE DIFFERENCES IN 9-1-1 SERVICE. Traditional wired telephones provide the telephone number and the exact street address to the 9-1-1 center. Wireless phones may not display the telephone number and only display the general area the 9-1-1 call is coming from. These differences are especially important to consider if there are children or others in your home who may not know your address.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CALL 9-1-1

Only call 9-1-1 when you need an EMERGENCY RESPONSE from police, fire, or emergency medical personnel.

If the situation does not require immediate police, fire, or medical attention, call the appropriate non-emergency number.

DO NOT CALL 9-1-1 IF YOU ONLY NEED INFORMATION. The business telephone numbers of the police and fire departments are listed on the front inside cover of telephone directories for easy reference.

DURING AN AREA-WIDE EVENT SUCH AS A STORM OR AN EARTHQUAKE, IT IS ESPECIALLY CRITICAL TO ONLY CALL 9-1-1 IF YOU NEED AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE. In these situations, many people become frightened and call 9-1-1 just because an event is happening even though they do not have an emergency. Others call 9-1-1 to report outages or find out the status of other services, such as during power outages. 9-1-1 lines quickly become overloaded with these unnecessary calls, and real emergency calls cannot get through.

WHEN YOU CALL 9-1-1

YOU WILL BE ASKED:

- 1) The nature of the emergency.
- 2) The exact location of the emergency, including cross streets, mileposts, landmarks, and community name.

REMEMBER: You must be able to provide your exact location before help can be sent. Only general location information is provided when you call.

- 3) Your name and wireless phone number, including area code.

Your call may not have initially routed to the correct 9-1-1 center, and your call may be transferred.

WHEN YOU CALL 9-1-1 cont'd

Stay calm and answer all questions. Do not hang up until told to do so, unless there is a threat to your safety. If your wireless phone loses service during the call and you are disconnected, call 9-1-1 as soon as you are able to re-establish a connection. The 9-1-1 center may not have your phone number in order to call you back. After you have made a 9-1-1 call, leave your phone's power on in case the 9-1-1 center needs to call you back.

Understand how your phone works after it makes a 9-1-1 call. **Most phones lock into Emergency Mode after calling 9-1-1**, and you may not be able to make other calls temporarily. You should know how to unlock your phone.

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR 9-1-1

- 1) Only call 9-1-1 if you need an emergency RESPONSE. Do not call if you only need information.
- 2) Be familiar with your phone, and how it may be programmed to call 9-1-1. Your phone may be programmed to dial 9-1-1 with one button. You may accidentally call 9-1-1 and not know it.
- 3) **Handle your phone carefully to prevent the accidental misdialing** of 9-1-1, such as the phone getting bumped in your pocket or purse.
- 4) When you call 9-1-1, stay calm and be prepared to give your location. **Help cannot be sent until you can tell them where the emergency is.**
- 5) Maintain service from a Wireless Company for your phone. Your phone must have service from a Wireless Company in order for your phone number to display at the 9-1-1 center.
- 6) Know how 9-1-1 location information from your Wireless Company works. You may need to purchase a phone that is equipped with GPS-location capabilities in order for your general location to display at the 9-1-1 center.
- 7) **Parents:** Teach your children how to use your wireless phone to dial 9-1-1.



King County

SAFE USE OF YOUR PHONE ON THE ROAD

DRIVING SAFELY IS YOUR #1 PRIORITY.

Do not allow your wireless phone to be a distraction to driving.

If you need to make a phone call, pull off the road to a safe location before placing your call.

**For additional information contact the
King County E-911 Program Office at:
(206)296-3911.**