



Calling 911 – The first step of emergency response

Thankfully, most of us will never be in a situation in which we will feel the need to reach out for emergency assistance by calling 911. That is one of the reasons why making a needed emergency call is often delayed – there is a general fear or discomfort with engaging with emergency services. For some, it is seen as a sign of weakness or being inadequate. The national 911 system was established to provide a uniform, easy-to-remember and use method of calling for immediate help. Its implementation has saved hundreds of thousands of lives and has become synonymous with “help is on the way”.

This demonstration is designed to help participants:

1. become more familiar with the 911 service
2. recognize the importance of making an emergency call as early as possible, if the need is really there
3. understand the need to provide information requested by the 911 operator in order that the appropriate emergency services can be sent to the scene

Procedure:

1. Assign one participant to be the 911 operator, using his or her personal cell phone.
2. For each of the following situations, assign a student to serve as the person who calls the 911 operator:
 - motor vehicle collision involving a down powerline
 - an injury involving considerable blood loss
 - a tractor operator entrapped under a rolled over tractor
 - fire on a combine in a remote field
3. Ask each of the students in step 2 to use their personal cell phone to call the 911 operator (*the phone number of the student serving as the 911 operator*) and explain their emergency situation. As each mock call is made, discuss what information the 911 dispatcher needs to know, including:
 - name of caller
 - location of incident/special directions
 - nature of the emergency
 - number of victims
 - type of injuries

NOTE: In some communities, the local 911 system will allow for students to make actual practice calls to the 911 operator as a means of reducing the discomfort for making such calls. Remind participants that making a 911 call must always be considered a serious matter and should never be done as a joke.

Materials Needed



Cell phones