

# Racine County Emergency Communications Center

14116 Washington Avenue  
Sturtevant, Wisconsin 53177  
(262) 886-2300 Non-Emergency; 9-1-1 Emergency



## ***Why do the call takers ask so many questions when I call 911?***

Emergency call takers need to get accurate information to allow officers to make the best decision on how to approach the situation. Call takers handling fire and paramedic calls must also consider the well-being of the public and the safety of the firefighters and paramedics. Callers will be asked:

- Where
- What
- Who
- When
- (maybe) Weapons

**The information you provide to the call taker is sent to the appropriate dispatcher as it is gathered.** The dispatchers, in most cases, immediately relay the information to responding officers, paramedics or firefighters while they are on their way to the call. This allows them to help make educated decisions about how they respond to the call and what equipment they take with them.

## ***If I call 911, what will they ask me?***

### **1. *Where is your emergency?***

This is the address where the emergency is actually happening. If you do not know the actual address, tell the call taker and then:

- Give cross streets
- Provide landmarks, business names or parks near the emergency.
- Look at the house numbers in the area.
- If you are calling from inside a home or business, look on a piece of mail.
- If you have a GPS, offer the call taker the GPS coordinates.

### **When asked for a location, we need you to be specific.**

Also, if the suspect has left the scene (such as a theft suspect), we need to know in what direction the suspect went and a description of who we are to look for.

### **If you are asked to describe a suspect, start with the most obvious things.**

Some examples are:

- "He was a white male."
- "He/she had a gun."
- "He/she was at least 6 feet tall."
- "He/she was wearing a bright red jacket."
- "He had a long brown beard."

### **If you describe a vehicle, include:**

- License plate information, including the state.
- Color.
- Year. (If unknown, tell the call taker if it was a new or old vehicle.)
- Make and Model. (Was it a Honda? Nissan? Ford?)
- Body style. (Was it a 4-door? Hatchback? Pick-up truck?)
- Other distinguishing characteristics you observed. (Did it have a toolbox? Stickers?)

## **2. *What is the phone number you're calling from?***

This is the phone number you are calling from. The call taker needs this if, for some reason, there is need to call you back.

## **3. *What is the problem?***

Tell us exactly what is happening. Be as concise as possible. Tell us what the problem is now, not what you believe led up to the problem.

- "I see a fight on the corner of 6th and Main."
- "I am fighting with my husband."
- "There is a car accident in the westbound lane of Washington Avenue at Ohio Street."

We also need to know if you are going to be at, or near, the scene when we arrive because the police may need to talk to you, or you may need to point out the exact location. We may ask you what kind of car you are in, or what color clothing you are wearing.

## ***Why do the call takers ask so many questions on a medical call?***

You will be asked a series of questions that will help determine the response of paramedics to the call. The paramedics will be better prepared to help the patient with the information you have provided.

- What is the location of the emergency? (Where are the paramedics needed?)
- Tell me exactly what is happening (with the patient right now).
- How old is the patient? (If you don't know, say so and then give a guess of the age.)
- Is the patient conscious and breathing?

All Racine County Communications Center call takers are Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) certified. Based on defined protocols, the dispatcher will give pre-arrival instructions to aid the victim.

## ***If I call to report a fire, what should I be prepared to tell the call taker?***

You should be prepared to answer questions like these:

- Where is the fire?
- What is on fire?
- How large is the fire? (This is only an estimate; think about the size of the fire in relation to something common: the size of a living room, the size of a football field, bigger than a grocery store parking lot.)
- Are any structures threatened? Are there flames moving close to any homes or buildings?
- Are there power lines involved?
- Do you know if there is anyone inside the housing or building?
- Do you know if there has been anyone injured?

## ***When I call the non-emergency number, why do I get asked to hold on?***

The same dispatchers who answer 911 calls also answer the non-emergency calls for service for all law enforcement and fire/EMS agencies in Racine County (except the City of Burlington). When the Communications Center is busy, the dispatchers must ask non-emergency callers to hold on while they answer other (possible emergency) calls. Every effort is made to get back to you as quickly as possible, and your patience and understanding is appreciated.