

BERRIEN COUNTY PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATION CENTER

Tips for Calling 9-1-1

Know Your Location: Wireless calls to 911 provide location information, but it is not specific to your exact location in most instances. Be prepared to provide detailed location information on where you are so that help can get to you as quickly as possible. If you're not sure of the address, find a piece of mail, look at a mailbox, give close cross streets and a description of the location and/or provide landmarks.

Call If You Can, Text If You Can't: Text-to-911 service is available in an increasing number of communities around the country, including Berrien County. The service benefits individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or in a situation where they cannot speak and make a voice call. However, a traditional voice call, if possible, is still the best way to reach emergency services.

Stay Calm and Don't Hang Up: Tell the call-taker exactly what happened. Answer the call-taker's questions succinctly to the best of your ability. He or she will ask you questions in order to provide information to responders and to determine what you need to do before help arrives. Call-takers will assist you in providing medical attention to patients, such as CPR instructions, before responders arrive.

Stay on the line until you are instructed to do otherwise so that you can provide any necessary information or assistance to the 911 call-taker. Even if you accidentally call 911, don't hang up. Inform the call-taker that you dialed accidentally and that there is no emergency.

Use 911 For Emergencies: If you need police but do not have an emergency please call a non-emergency number so that the 911 lines remain open for callers with life-threatening emergencies. The Berrien County Public-Safety Communication Center can be reached at 269-983-3060; Niles City Dispatch can be reached at 269-683-1313; Van Buren County Central Dispatch can be reached at 269-657-3101; Cass County Dispatch can be reached at 269-445-1205. Many police departments' phone lines also ring into the appropriate Dispatch Center after hours, or if they do not have staff in the office.

Smart911 & Rave Facility Profiles: All Southwest Michigan area Dispatch Centers participate with Smart911, which allows citizens and businesses to build safety profiles to provide 911 with important information in the event of an emergency. Learn more and create a safety profile at smart911.com.

More information about local 911 services and Smart911 can be found at www.berriencounty.org under PublicSafety/911.