

# Using your mobile phone in an EMERGENCY



**Calls to 9-1-1 from mobile phones are free of airtime charges.**

## CALLING 9-1-1

In most parts of the country, your mobile phone number and general location will be forwarded automatically through the 9-1-1 network to the 9-1-1 operator. However, it is important to allow the operator to confirm your number and identify your precise location or the precise location of the emergency.

When you call 9-1-1, you should give your complete 10-digit phone number to the 9-1-1 operator. This is important because the operator may have to call you back if the call is disconnected.

In addition, tell the operator as best you can exactly where you are. Remember, your mobile phone can be used anywhere service is available. Only you can provide your precise location or the location of the emergency.

If you are driving, stop your vehicle if it is safe to do so and look for street

signs, addresses or landmarks. If you are driving on a highway, try to provide the highway number, your direction of travel and look for exit numbers or major buildings.

Not all local governments in Canada operate 9-1-1 systems. Wireless carriers endeavour to route 9-1-1 calls to an appropriate call-taking agency (the local police department, for example) in areas where no 9-1-1 service exists. However, if you routinely use your mobile phone in areas where a 9-1-1 system does not exist, you should know the phone numbers for local police, fire and ambulance services.

## WHEN TO CALL 9-1-1

You should call 9-1-1 in situations where the safety of people or property is at risk. Examples of 9-1-1 emergencies include: fire, a crime in progress, or a medical emergency. Please direct non-emergency calls to the appropriate resource so that 9-1-1 call-takers can devote all of their attention to responding to true emergencies. Remember, in an emergency situation, a few wasted seconds can be a matter of life or death.

## DO NOT PRE-PROGRAM 9-1-1 INTO SPEED-DIAL

Unintentional emergency calls from mobile phones can occur if you accidentally press a speed-dial key that has been pre-programmed to call 9-1-1. In some instances, you may not even be aware that the emergency key has been pressed. Check your phone's manual or contact your retail dealer to ensure any pre-programmed emergency numbers have been disabled. In parts of the country, it is illegal to pre-program 9-1-1 into speed-dial.

## TIPS FOR USING 9-1-1

Remain calm and speak clearly. Identify which emergency services you require – police, fire or ambulance – and be prepared to provide the following information:

- ✓ **What is your 10-digit mobile phone number?**
- ✓ **What is the location?**
- ✓ **What is the emergency?**

Please remain on the line to provide additional information if requested by the call-taker. Do not hang up until the operator advises you to do so. After hanging up, leave your mobile phone turned on in case the operator must call you back.

## TEXTING DURING AN EMERGENCY

Most mobile phones can send text messages, but remember that you cannot send text messages to 9-1-1.

During a large scale emergency, such as a natural disaster, voice networks can become congested or overloaded with an influx of mobile phone voice calls. This can result in individuals not being able to speak with the people they want to contact, such as friends or loved ones. In some rare instances, congestion on the voice network can also hinder communications amongst emergency service personnel.

Text messages, however, use less network capacity than normal mobile phone voice calls and can be more reliable for brief communication with friends or loved ones during emergencies. So, even if a network is congested with voice calls, a text message to a friend or loved one may have a higher likelihood of getting through sooner than a voice call. And equally as important, by texting during an emergency, you are freeing up the voice lines for emergency officials to use.

The wireless telecommunications industry is committed to supporting improvements to 9-1-1 service. Wireless phone service providers are working with 9-1-1 call-takers, local telephone companies and government agencies to implement a national approach to enhancing 9-1-1 services.

The information in this brochure has been developed in cooperation with various 9-1-1 service providers across Canada.

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