



Calling the for Public Safety Assistance:

El Centro has an enhanced 9-1-1 system, called "Vesta Dispatch". This means that the 9-1-1 dispatcher can identify the phone number and address of the calling party through the system's computer. This technology assists in timely dispatching of police or fire units to the emergency scene.

Common fire emergencies include structure fires, brush fires, automobile accidents with injuries and smoke. Common medical emergencies include heart attack, respiratory difficulty, seizures and diabetic patients.

When a call is received by the 9-1-1 dispatcher they will say, "What is your emergency? The caller should give a description of the problem, allowing the dispatcher to decide how to route the call. The 9-1-1 dispatcher is actually a police dispatcher assigned to process in-coming emergency calls.

The dispatcher will begin to dispatch emergency units immediately. El Centro dispatchers have all been trained in "Emergency Medical Dispatching" for medical emergencies to provide self-help instructions to the caller.

El Centro Fire Department fire engines, ladder trucks and rescue squad are dispatched according to the nature of the call. The closest unit will be sent to ensure that help arrives as soon as possible. It also means that more than one fire unit may be sent to the scene.

All El Centro Fire Department personnel are medically trained, at a minimum, are EMT's (Emergency Medical Technicians). Certain firefighters receive additional training as paramedics. They are capable of providing advanced life-support treatment including IVs, drug therapy and cardiac monitoring. Currently, paramedics are assigned to engine companies, and rescue squad.

Whenever a person calls 9-1-1, their needs should be stated in a clear manner to ensure prompt and accurate assistance. They also need to remain on the phone until the dispatcher has released them from the conversation.

Try to remain calm. State what type of emergency it is - fire, car accident, heart attack, etc., then inform the dispatcher of the location of the incident.

Stay on the phone. The dispatcher may ask more questions or want you to stay on the line. Emergency units already have been dispatched even while you are talking with the dispatcher. Children should be taught their home address and telephone number as soon as possible. In most cases, when a caller dials 9-1-1, the address and phone number of the caller's location is displayed to the 9-1-1

dispatcher. However, this is not always verified because of information that may be called in from cellular or mobile phones.

Location...

When the fire department responds to a given location, it may be delayed in arriving if the address is not clearly visible from the street. Although it's fairly easy to spot a column of smoke from a house fire, it's difficult to see someone's heart attack from the street. In a medical emergency, firefighters may waste critical time having to knock on several doors to try and find a correct address. Make sure your address is clearly visible from the street. The numbers should be three or four inches in height and of contrasting color to their background.

This problem is compounded in large condominium and apartment complexes. Arriving at a correct address, the engine company finds a huge residential facility with many buildings in the complex. Make sure large identification lettering or numbering is mounted on the side of the building. This is as important as the street address. It would be even better if someone could be standing near the street to direct the fire units to the appropriate apartment.

Code 3 Response...

Code 3 means emergency response in an emergency vehicle. When an emergency vehicle is driving with its lights flashing and the siren going, that means it's going Code 3 to an emergency somewhere.

When an emergency vehicle is heard and/or seen, drivers should carefully pull their vehicle to the right of the road and stop. If they are at an intersection, or stopped in traffic when they see lights or hear a siren, drivers should remain stopped and wait until the emergency vehicles have passed. The law is specific; drivers must yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle. Drivers also should stay 300 feet behind emergency vehicles.

A crash involving an emergency vehicle delays help to those who need it. Firefighters are careful to avoid vehicle collisions by driving slowly when traveling against traffic, or coming to a complete stop at intersections. The cooperation of all vehicles on the roadway is required. Be careful when driving by or around a motor vehicle accident or any situation where emergency vehicles are parked and the firefighters are working. Resist the urge to "rubber neck" This may result in additional injuries.