
City of Rancho Mirage Fire Department

CALLING EMERGENCY 9-1-1

The 9-1-1 emergency system has provided a simple and effective way for people to summon emergency help. Here are some things you should know about calling 9-1-1. When you dial 9-1-1 from a “landline” such as your home or office, your call is routed to a primary Public Safety Access Point (PSAP), which is your local law enforcement dispatch center. If the emergency is law enforcement related, such as a burglary or assault, then the dispatcher will process the call and send out the police officers. If the emergency is fire, rescue, or medically related, you will be connected to the secondary PSAP, which is your local fire department dispatch center. The fire department dispatcher will have access to the location of the phone line you are using and will ask you to verify the location of the emergency. The dispatcher will also ask you about the nature of the emergency as the call is being processed. While you are on the phone, firefighters and paramedics are on the way. It is critical that you stay calm and clearly answer all questions the dispatcher asks. This will ensure that the firefighters have all the information they need to handle the emergency. When you dial 9-1-1 from a “cell phone” there are differ-

ences in the way the system works. First, unless your cell phone has Global Position Satellite (GPS) capability, which allows the 9-1-1 dispatcher to identify the exact location, the dispatcher may not be able to determine your location so it is critical that you know where you are when you call. Second, if you call 9-1-1 from a cell phone, the first person you talk to will be a California Highway Patrol dispatcher. Tell the dispatcher your cell phone number (in case you get disconnected), the exact location and the nature of the emergency. Again, it is critical that you stay calm and clearly answer all questions the dispatcher asks. Your information will be passed on to the appropriate fire department or law enforcement dispatch center. Please remember that 9-1-1 is for emergencies only. Every day, countless people call 9-1-1 to ask for information or to report issues that are not emergencies. This ties up emergency phone lines and personnel that are needed elsewhere.