

## Tips for Calling 911

- Remain calm
- Speak clearly and listen carefully
- Do not hang up until directed to do so by the 911 dispatcher
- Be prepared to answer questions. The dispatcher will start emergency personnel, but will ask you questions and keep the responders updated. For example, “Is the person breathing?” or “Are there any injuries?”
- Know the address you are calling about, if you do not know the address try to give the best description possible to the dispatcher
- Do not exaggerate, but explain the situation to the dispatcher
- Make sure children know how to use 911 and understand that it is only for emergencies
- Police respond to all 911 calls, even hang ups. To ensure everyone’s safety in all situations police officers will respond to all 911 calls.



## Test your knowledge!

1. A house or car is on fire
  2. There was a minor crash and no one is hurt
  3. There was a crash and there are injured people
  4. Someone is trying to get into your house
  5. Someone is in your garage without your permission
  6. Someone is threatening to hurt you
  7. Someone sent you 15 text messages in the last 30 minutes saying they don’t like you
  8. A child is missing
  9. The neighbors are fighting and it sounds like they are pushing each other
  10. You are returning a call to a police officer
- Answers: 1) 911, 2) 251-3281, 3) 911, 4) 911, 5) 911, 6) 911, 7) 251-3281, 8) 911, 9) 911, 10) 251-3281

**When in doubt –  
Dial 911!**

Waite Park Police Department  
19 13th Avenue N  
Waite Park, MN 56387

## Waite Park Police Department

# A Guide to Calling 911



*Building a Community  
Partnership*

# 911 Information

There are times when someone in need of emergency response dials the Waite Park Police Department's non-emergency number instead of dialing 911. People fear they will get in trouble if they call 911 or they don't want to bother the 911 dispatchers. When people dial the police department's non-emergency number instead of 911 the response time to people in need is lengthened. To ensure everyone's safety and to make sure you get the help you need quickly we have developed this brochure to explain the reasons to call 911.

911 dispatchers have many computers, phones and radios that aid them in getting you the help you need quickly. They have caller ID and computers that allow them to see the address you are calling from and can page out help from any police or fire department within Stearns County in seconds.

\*\*\*Reminder\*\*\*

Old cell phones, even phones no longer on a cell phone plan will call 911 if dialed. If this happens, stay on the line and speak with the dispatcher. Kids playing with old cell phones can also dial 911.

## Why call 911 vs. non-emergency number (320-251-3281)

There are many reasons why calling 911 instead of a police department's non-emergency number is the right number to call.

- 911 dispatchers can quickly dispatch police, fire or ambulance service
- Waite Park Police Department is staffed during regular business hours. After hours and on weekends, the phone is rolled over and answered by a Stearns County Dispatcher
- 911 dispatchers can easily radio officers from other agencies to assist, if needed
- 911 dispatchers have a higher level of training and have the tools (computers and programs) needed to easily track and dispatch officers, fire fighters, and ambulance in a safe and quick manner
- 911 dispatchers are trained to walk people through medical situations such as someone experiencing a heart attack, a severe burn, an accident victim or even a baby being born



## When do I call 911 and when do I use the non-emergency number?



Below are some examples that you can use to determine when it is appropriate to call 911 or when it is appropriate to call the Waite Park Police Department's non-emergency number.

### When to call 911

- Whenever you need police, fire or an ambulance to respond immediately
- When there is a crime in progress
- You fear for your safety
- Someone is being hurt
- A dog is biting or attacking someone

### When to call (320) 251-3281

- There is an unknown dog in your yard
- You need a copy of a police report
- Someone broke into or damaged your vehicle
- You have a question about a program offered by the police department
- You would like to know what happened on your street last night
- Your bike was stolen

