



## Tips on Proper Use of 911

- An emergency is a sudden or unexpected development that could have a serious, negative impact on life or property requiring an immediate emergency service(s) response. The 911 system was developed so emergency police, fire and ambulance services could be accessed by the public expeditiously.
- If you have an emergency report it immediately. All of Columbia County's fire departments and most ambulance departments are staffed by volunteers. The possibility of longer response times should be considered as members may be coming from their homes or workplaces not from their fire or ambulance stations. So it is extremely important that you call immediately so help can be dispatched to you ASAP.
- You can call 911 free from any pay phone in Columbia County.
- 911 should only be used to report emergencies.
- The non-emergency phone number to report minor incidents or to obtain general information in Columbia County is 784-6300.
- When speaking with a 911 dispatcher remain calm. Yelling or talking fast will not speed things up and more often than not will delay help because the information may need to be repeated.
- Expect the 911 dispatcher to ask your name, phone number, location of the emergency and for a brief description of the situation. This information is very important and will not delay a response by emergency personnel. Columbia County 911 dispatchers work as a team. While one dispatcher is talking with you another is summoning the help you need.
- On medical emergencies, 911 dispatchers are trained to relay first aid information to those persons willing to intervene, pending the arrival of the ambulance.
- Playing with 911 or reporting false alarms could have a detrimental effect on a person who really needs help. These activities could delay a person with a true emergency from getting through to a dispatcher or may divert emergency services away from a person who really needs help.
- A person who maliciously plays with 911 could be arrested.