



FAQ's About Calling 9-1-1 in Massachusetts

What should you do if you accidentally call 9-1-1?

If you call 9-1-1 by accident, please do not hang-up; wait on the line until your call is answered. Explain to the dispatcher that it was an accidental call and that you have no emergency. The dispatcher may ask you several questions to ascertain the situation and determine if your safety is at risk and you are unable to speak freely.

Can I use my WIFI dialing mobile device to call 9-1-1?

Yes, but please note - if you use WiFi dialing on your mobile phone to call 9-1-1, the **billing address** you have provided to your phone carrier is the address that will show up for the dispatcher on the NG9-1-1 system. **If you are not calling from the billing address you provided, the dispatcher will not receive your current location.** This is one of the reasons the dispatcher will always ask for your location to compare with what they see on the screens.

Can I use my VOIP phone to call 9-1-1?

Yes, but please note - if you use a mobile VoIP service such as MagicJack, the **billing address** you have provided to your phone carrier is the address that will show up for the dispatcher on the NG9-1-1 system. If your home address ever changes, please remember to update your account with your new address to avoid your old address displaying for the dispatcher if you ever dial 9-1-1.

Can my old wireless device that no longer has an active service plan call 9-1-1?

Yes, this is referred to as an uninitialized phone. Federal regulations require all mobile phones to be capable of dialing 9-1-1 regardless of a subscription plan – this includes uninitialized phones. Therefore, please use caution, when allowing children to play with your old wireless devices as this causes many accidental 9-1-1 calls tying up emergency resources.

Why does my iPhone often call 9-1-1 on its own?

Starting with iOS 11, iPhones are equipped with a feature called “Emergency SOS” that allows quick access to 9-1-1. On an iPhone 8 or later version, the feature is activated if you press and hold the side button and one of the volume buttons on your device. To activate the feature on an iPhone 7 the user must rapidly press the side (or top) button five times. Unfortunately, it’s easy to hit these buttons and activate this feature by accident — or have them pressed while the phone is in a pocket, purse, or cup holder in the car. That also means a child holding your iPhone could easily trigger this feature and call 9-1-1 accidentally without realizing it.

A way to minimize the number of times this feature is accidentally activated is to be sure the “Countdown Sound” is turned on. That will give you awareness by counting down and sounding an alert that a 9-1-1 call is being initiated.

However, if the feature is accidentally activated and you don’t realize it until it is already ringing to 9-1-1, please **remain on the line** and let the answering dispatcher know it was accidental and that you have no emergency. If you disconnect before the call is answered, the dispatcher will spend time attempting to call you back to investigate whether or not there is an emergency. The time that is spent on the call back ties up emergency services that could be needed and used elsewhere for an actual emergency.