MAKING 9-1-1 WORK FOR YOU!

THINGS **PARENTS** NEEDS TO KNOW

There are many things a parent can do to ensure their family's safety. Adequately preparing your home and teaching children how to use 9-1-1 properly from an early age may one day save a life. If you are unsure where to begin, here are a few of the key things you can do and messages you can relay to youngsters to ensure that your household is prepared should a call for help ever have to be made:

Post your address clearly and prominently in multiple locations. Having your address easily visible at the end of your driveway AND on your home itself will ensure that first responders aren't left wondering if they are at the right location. Make sure that you use numbering and lettering that can be seen during the day or night, and are visible no matter which direction you are coming from. Many cities and counties have ordinances that will give you direction on how to post your address properly, so be sure to check with local authorities for more information.

Report missing street signs in your neighborhood immediately. Making sure that your neighborhood has all the proper signage not only helps friends and family find your home, but it can be crucial during an emergency situation and time is of the essence.

Don't let your kids play with old cell phones. Many people don't know this, but the law mandates that even old, deactivated cell phones with no associated service plan must still be able to call 9-1-1. An old cell phone may seem to be the perfect free toy, but giving your seemingly useless device to a youngster may lead to problems. So, if you want to turn that old phone you have laying around into a plaything, be sure to remove the battery before turning it over to your inquisitive youngster. Better yet, consider donating any unwanted retired wireless devices to a charitable program that can safely recycle them.

Know the capabilities of the devices your family uses. 9-1-1 can be contacted from pretty much every device that can make phone calls (traditional landline, cell, VoIP), but the callback and location information that accompanies your call to the 9-1-1 center can vary drastically amongst technologies and between regions. It is your job to be knowledgeable about the devices your family could use to call 9-1-1, as well as the potential limitations that may be associated with them. Contact your service provider(s) for more information.

Teach your kids what 9-1-1 is. Let them know that 9-1-1 is the number to call when they need help or they see someone who needs help right away.

Teach your kids when to call 9-1-1. It is important that children learn that there are specific times when calling 9-1-1 is the right thing to do. Let them know that they should only call when someone or something is hurt or in danger or if they need a policeman, a fireman, or a doctor.

Practice makes perfect. Help your kids memorize information that will be useful to 9-1-1 call takers, such as their name, their parents' names, their address, and their phone number. The more comfortable they are, the more quickly they can provide vital information to the 9-1-1 call taker who can then dispatch the appropriate responders to the location.

Engage in ongoing, age appropriate training. Once is never enough, as they say, and your job isn't done after your kids understand the basics. As the years pass, technology will change and so will your child's capacity for providing crucial details to the 9-1-1 call taker. It is up to you to make sure that they are knowledgeable about the features and capabilities of the 9-1-1 system and that they are ready to provide the most detailed and useful information possible when they call 9-1-1.

CTIA The Wireless Foundation
www.wirelessfoundation.org

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