

Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)

When you call 9-1-1, haven't you ever wondered, "*What's with all the questions?! All I want is to get this patient to the hospital for treatment as quickly as possible. I don't have time for all of these questions.*"

What's with all those questions is that the Connecticut Legislature passed legislation which requires that all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs or 9-1-1 Communication Centers) use a system called Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) for every medical call they receive.

The EMD System is a series of questions which the 9-1-1 Telecommunicator asks the caller in order to determine:

- What the medical situation is
- If intervention is needed immediately. (Don't touch the down wire, pull the victim from the water)
- What resources need to be dispatched (Fire, Police, EMS, Medic)
- How the resources should respond (Lights and Sirens or with the flow of traffic)
- If pre-arrival instructions need to be given to the caller (CPR, control of bleeding, child birth)

The EMD System is based upon a patient's "signs and symptoms," not upon specific diagnosis. The Telecommunicator will ask questions like:

- Address
- Call Back number
- What's the problem, tell me exactly what happened.
- Age/Sex of Patient (Sixties, seventies, teens, if exact age isn't know)
- Is the patient conscious?
- Is the patient breathing?

Depending on the answer to the above questions, more specific questions may be asked. When the caller is not with the patient or does not know the answers to the questions, it can generate a higher level of response and tie up resources unnecessarily. It's helpful to have as much information about the patient as you can when you call.

While you are talking with the 9-1-1 Telecommunicator, the telecommunicator is entering your information into the 9-1-1 system. Based on the nature of the call, the telecommunicator sends, or dispatches, the appropriate help. In many instances, a second Telecommunicator dispatches help, based on the information entered into the system, while you are still talking.

Some PSAPs transfer medical calls to another agency which will then conduct EMD.

Answering the 9-1-1 Telecommunicator's questions allows for a quicker dispatch, provides patient information to the responding personnel and gets you the services you need in the least amount of time.

If you would like more information about EMD or 9-1-1 operations, contact the Connecticut Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications at (860) 685-8080, or your town's public safety answering point.

This article was written by the 9-1-1 Accessibility Workgroup with representatives from:

- Avon Police Department
- Brookfield Police Department
- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
- City of Hartford
- Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired
- Cromwell Police Department
- Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Social Services - Aging Services Division
- Groton Emergency Communications Center
- National Emergency Numbers Association - Connecticut Chapter
- New Fairfield Emergency Communications Center
- New Haven Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities
- New Haven Emergency Response Center
- Norwalk Police Department
- Norwich Police Department
- Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
- Trumbull Police Department
- Westport Police Department.