



Frequently Asked Questions

- **When should I call 911?**

When you have a medical, fire, or police emergency. If the situation seems urgent or has the potential to become dangerous, call 911. Call-takers or dispatchers will determine whether your call should be handled by 911 or can be transferred to another person or agency. When in doubt, call 911!

- **When I dial 911, which fire station answers my telephone call?**

Your 911 phone call isn't answered at any of The Villages Fire Stations. It is answered at a Public Safety Answering Point for 911, or PSAP for short. The call-taker will ask a few, simple questions about your emergency and, if it is either fire or medical in nature, the call is immediately transferred to the dispatch center for Villages Fire Rescue.

- **Doesn't the 911 operator know my address when I call? Why does he/she have to ask?**

If you call 911 from your hard-wired (house) phone, the location of that telephone appears on the call-taker's computer screen. It also gives your phone number as well as information about your primary police service, fire service, EMS service and ambulance service. If you call from your cell phone, none of that information may be available. The call taker will always ask for the location of the emergency either to confirm what he/she already sees on the screen or to learn the location from the cell phone caller. As a result, if you're calling from a cell phone, you need to know the COUNTY, YOUR ADDRESS, or CLOSEST CROSS STREETS to your location.

- **How long does the 911 call take?**

The average 911 call only takes about 30 seconds until help is dispatched. Of course, that time is dependent upon you – the caller – knowing where the emergency is.

- **If I have a medical emergency, why does a fire truck come to my house?**

Like many fire departments in America, The Villages Fire Rescue purchases "medical engines," fire trucks that are capable of doing both fire and EMS work. Fire trucks are a big-dollar item, frequently \$300,000 or more. In order to justify that type of cost, the truck has to be used. Running both EMS and fire calls gets the best value for the dollar spent. Each of these "medical engines" have the same equipment as an ambulance, except for the stretcher. Every medical engine is staffed with at least one firefighter/paramedic and one firefighter/EMT.

- **What should I do if the batteries need to be changed in the smoke detectors at my house and I cannot reach them?**

Call The Villages Fire Rescue at 352-205-8280 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm for same day service. We recommend batteries be changed once per



year. If you have a beeping alarm after normal business hours, please call 352-753-0550.

- **What is the Neighborhood AED Program?**

By training volunteers, purchasing an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and tying into the 911 system, neighbors can become first responders to rescue fellow neighbors. Each responder would have ReadyAlert paging service. When a cardiac arrest occurs, a call is made to 911. Once the 911 operator determines the nature of the emergency to be a cardiac arrest, the system would dispatch the AED group (in addition to medical personnel) via ReadyAlert. While one or more responders would go immediately to the home, others would go to the AED unit and take it where needed. The AED is stored in a locked cabinet located in the neighborhood and all responders have keys. Currently, there are over 195 AED groups in The Villages community.

- **What do I do if my neighborhood wants to participate in the Neighborhood AED Program?**

Contact Emergency Response Specialist Lt. John Longacre by calling 352-205-8280 or by email at john.longacre@districtgov.org.

- **What types of calls do The Villages Fire Rescue personnel respond to?**

Approximately 20% of our calls are fire or service related, while 57% are medical. Those fire calls can be as simple as a chirping smoke detector or as serious as a house fire. On the medical side, well over half of our calls fall into five groups: falls, cardiac, dizziness or fainting, difficulty breathing, or general weakness.

- **I've heard that The Villages Fire Rescue has an average response time of four minutes, but when I called a few weeks ago, it took longer for rescue personnel to arrive. Why?**

The Villages Fire Rescue's average response time is four minutes, but that is an average. Our drivers face the same problems you face every time you get behind the wheel of your car: traffic, weather, detours, delays, and more! While weather is a big factor, we also face drivers who do not yield the right of way even when the siren is blaring and the emergency lights are on. Travel distance is also a factor that can impact response times. You may live right next door to the fire station, but the crew could be several blocks away at another emergency. In that case, personnel from another station will be dispatched causing additional travel time. In all events, rapid and safe response is a priority for every firefighter in The Villages Fire Rescue.

- **What else should I know?**

There are several things that may make your 911 call less distressing, frantic, or frustrating:



- *If you are incapacitated and cannot get to the door to let the EMT's and paramedics in, tell the dispatcher. Is there a "hidden key?" Is there another means of entry? Give instructions as to how you want the emergency responders to get in.*
- *If you have pets, and can put them in a secure room, do so for their own safety and the safety of the emergency responders.*
- *Can the emergency responders see the house numbers for your home? Are the outside lights on? Can you give the call-taker any information that will make it easier for emergency personnel to find you?*
- *Yes, you have an emergency but be patient! The call-taker and/or dispatcher can only perform his/her function if you remain calm and can provide the necessary information. There will be a lot of questions. Sometimes the same questions get asked several times. The call-taker is trying to get needed information and verify that the information is accurate.*
- *When in doubt, call 911. If the situation upsets or scares you enough to "think" it's an emergency, it probably is. Call 911. The call-taker can make the decision.*