

Calling 9-1-1

9-1-1 When should I call ... ?

9-1-1 should be used for all emergencies. Some examples of emergencies include:

- If you smell smoke or see fire
- To get help for someone who is hurt
- If you see someone getting hurt
- If you see a crime in progress
- If you're not sure you have an emergency

When a Los Banos Police Dispatcher receives a 9-1-1 call, they immediately know where the call was placed from. In addition, the call can quickly be transferred to the appropriate agency, the Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), California Highway Patrol, or other allied agency. If the call is reporting a medical emergency, the EMS dispatcher can give life saving information over the phone as the ambulance is being dispatched.

For non-emergency calls, please dial our business number, 209-827-7070.

What happens when I dial 9-1-1?

Only emergency calls should be directed to the 9-1-1 telephone number. If you are calling from a regular telephone (non-cellular) in Los Banos, the calls go directly to the Los Banos Police Department's 9-1-1 dispatch center. Through the 9-1-1 equipment and our Computer Aided Dispatch system, the caller's address and telephone number immediately appear on the computer screen at the Police Department. The Police Dispatchers are highly trained individuals that are prepared for any emergency situation. These dispatchers need to get specific information from you when you call 9-1-1. This information lets the dispatcher know what kind of response is required to the emergency (police, fire, paramedics, etc.)

- We will ask you what happened and where did the crime occur.
- We will ask you if anyone is injured, and if the injured person is in the same location.
- If the injured person is at a different address we will want to know where they are.
- We will ask you if you know the people involved in the incident.
- We will ask you if there are weapons involved.
- We will ask you for a full description of the people involved in the incident.
- We will ask you for associated vehicle descriptions.
- We may ask you to stay on the phone with us until officers arrive.
- We will ask you if you want to remain anonymous.

Why do the dispatchers ask so many questions?

Dispatchers are trained to try and get as much information as possible to best determine the nature of the problem. The information provided by callers can assist the officers in determining what they will need in order to keep others safe and out of harm's way.

Also, please realize that the dispatchers are trained to perform many tasks at once, and will often be dispatching emergency response units while they are talking to you. If they ask you to hold, it is because they are DISPATCHING HELP TO YOU. We immediately dispatch the appropriate emergency response for your problem along with 1 or 2 police officers.

Can I call 9-1-1 from a Cellular Phone?

Yes, you can. We would prefer that you use a regular telephone phone if possible, but if circumstances dictate that you use a cellular phone to call, you need to know the following:

All calls to 9-1-1 made from cellular phones are currently routed to the California Highway Patrol Dispatch Center in Merced. They will assess the incident and if warranted, will transfer the caller to the local police or fire department that has jurisdiction over the incident being reported.

As of this writing, only the phone number of the cell phone (if not blocked by the subscriber, which many are) and a general City location of the cell tower picking up the call are seen by the CHP dispatchers.

No information regarding the location of where the phone is located, or where the incident is happening is displayed, and none of this information is transferred when the call gets forwarded to a local police or fire dispatch center.

If the call gets disconnected before the dispatcher is able to obtain this information, you can imagine the difficult task it will be to find the caller or situation that was called in, without such important information.

Having a secondary phone number programmed into your cell phone is a good idea!

209-827-7070 ext.0 is the seven digit emergency number for Los Banos.

It is answered at the police department communications center by our staff of highly skilled dispatchers; the same ones that answer your 9-1-1 calls made from regular phones located in Los Banos. Please keep in mind that when calling 827-7070; no information about the phone number or location of the incident is available to the dispatcher. Please use this secondary number only if the incident you are reporting is occurring within Los Banos City.

What if I call 9-1-1 by mistake?

If you accidentally dial 9-1-1 or hear the Dispatcher answer "9-1-1 Emergency, How may I assist you?" please don't hang up. All you need to do is explain you have dialed the wrong number. The Dispatcher will confirm this with you by asking a few questions, to ensure you are safe and that there is no problem. If you do hang up without talking to a communicator:

The dispatcher will try to re-contact you.

If the phone line is busy, they will instruct an operator to break in on your conversation and request that you release the line for an emergency phone call.

If the dispatcher can not re-establish contact, you will have company stopping in. It is our policy to send police officers when a 9-1-1 caller hangs up, and can not re-contact the caller.

Can you handle calls from hearing impaired or non-English speakers?

You bet we can! Our 9-1-1 center is equipped with a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (T.D.D.) This device will detect an incoming call from devices used by those with hearing or speech impairments and allows them to report an emergency via a keyboard device directly to a 9-1-1 dispatcher. The device is interfaced with the telephone system in our 911 center and will automatically alert the dispatcher of an incoming T.D.D. call. Our 9-1-1 communicators have been trained on the operation and use of the T.D.D. Hearing impaired customers will not have to call a translation service in an emergency; they too can dial 9-1-1.

Los Banos Police Department's 9-1-1 system is also set up to provide for people who speak foreign languages. We have set up a direct line to AT&T Language Line personnel that can interpret the callers need for help. This is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Should I have called the Police?

In most cases, "Yes." Many people hesitate about calling the Police Department even when faced with circumstances that, upon reflection, were highly suspicious. Some people think they are "bothering" us, some are not sure what they are seeing, but fortunately, only a few don't want to get involved.

Use the following guide, and your good common sense and judgment. There are highly trained and experienced communications personnel at the other end of the line to ask questions and help decide the right thing to do. For emergencies and crimes in progress, call us on 9-1-1. Please use 209-827-7070 for non-emergency situations.

The following situations are inherently suspicious, and require your attention and immediate action by calling 9-1-1:

- Slow moving vehicles - Possible "casing" for a future crime, especially, if traveling with lights off at night, or if the course followed seems aimless and repetitive. This is suspicious in any location, but particularly so near schools, playgrounds, parks, or in large parking lots.
- Parked, occupied vehicles - Possible alcohol, narcotics, or sex crime in progress, especially in out-of-the-way places.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuable items - Possible burglary or theft, especially in front of closed business, late at night, or near an unoccupied residence.
- Abandoned, dirty, damaged vehicle - Possible stolen vehicle. In any case, abandoned vehicles are neighborhood blight and need to be tagged and removed.
- Vehicle containing weapons - Possible weapons violation. Be sure to tell police about the weapons.
- Persons attempting to enter a locked vehicle -
- Possible auto theft/ auto burglary in progress. If you see the window broken, almost a certain auto burglary.
- Persons tampering with vehicle, or removing parts - Possible auto tampering in progress, especially if late at night
- Persons loitering near a vehicle - Possibly "casing" the vehicle before breaking in to it.
- Business transactions; sales, being conducted from vehicles - Possible narcotics transaction in progress, or persons selling stolen goods, or conducting business without a license.
- Persons being forced into vehicles - Possible kidnapping or domestic violence in progress. Even if it appears to be parents dealing with a stubborn or recalcitrant child, let us make the determination. Be sure to get the vehicle description, license plate, and direction if the vehicle leaves by the time the officer arrives.
- Objects being thrown from vehicle - Possible dumping of contraband/ evidence/ littering
- Persons going door-to-door in residential area -
- Possible casing for theft or burglary; especially so if any of the people jump a fence or go into a back yard. It could also be a possible solicitation licensing violation. If you can, keep track of any vehicles associated with the people involved, and where they are. If anyone is rude, abusive, or threatening to you, make it a 9-1-1 call.
- Persons standing around in front of residence or business - Possible casing for a future crime; lookout for crime in progress.
- Forcing entry to residence or business - Possible burglary in progress
- Non-resident going into back or side yard -
- Possible burglary/ trespass in progress
- Person(s) going in through window - If not a known resident, almost a certain burglary in progress
- Person(s) running - Fleeing from a crime
- Persons carrying property - Possible theft in progress Persons loitering or acting in a strange or bizarre manner - Possible mental case/ under the influence of alcohol or drugs/ or waiting to commit a crime.
- Heavy human traffic coming and going to and from residence - Possible narcotic sales, or prostitution activity, especially if persons are strangers
- Person carrying any weapon or a concealed weapon - This is most likely a weapons violation, or someone about to commit a more serious crime. Off-duty or undercover police officers are specifically trained and experienced in keeping their weapons concealed at all times, and as a rule, clip their badge on their belt next to their weapon, use commercial holsters, and DO NOT keep weapons in their waistband. **BE SURE to tell dispatch where the weapon is being concealed**, and what the person is doing.
- Persons yelling, screaming, arguing, fighting - At the very least, a disturbance and disorderly conduct; quite possibly another more serious crime in progress (robbery, domestic violence, sexual assault). We'll ask you if there are any weapons visible, or any injuries to the people involved.

If you see any of these activities, please don't hesitate and ask yourself if you should be calling the police. Time is critical in each of these incidents.

We need you to call 9-1-1 immediately!

If you choose to have your information remain confidential, we can do that.