



It is impossible to give exact directions on when to call 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number because there can be special circumstances that are unique to your situation. However, the following information is a general guideline to follow when placing these calls. Calls are routed via the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Emergency Communications Center.

9-1-1 Calls

All life-threatening emergencies or in-progress actual crime

- **Active Structure Fire**
- **Missing Child or At-Risk Missing Adult**
- **Physical Assault**
- **Sexual Assault**
- **Robbery**
- **Home Invasion or building actively being broken into**
- **Vehicle accidents with injuries or hit-and-run**
- **Stolen vehicle that just occurred**

*If crime occurred more than 24hrs ago, call the non-emergency number.

Calling 9-1-1 can be intimidating, below are some tips to help callers during an emergency:

- Stay as calm as possible.
- Always give the address of the location of the emergency first. This is the most important information for a dispatcher in case the call drops.
- Be prepared to give a detailed description of the incident being reported.
- Wait for the dispatcher to ask questions and then answer clearly and calmly.
- Be prepared to give your name, phone number and address or location of where you are.
- Teach your children how to make a 9-1-1 call and practice (without calling 9-1-1). "I am at Cutten School" or "I am at the corner of Murray Road and Central Avenue" or "Our car is parked in front of the mall." If you are out and about, ask your children "if there was an emergency what would you tell the operator where we are right now?" It can be a game and good practice as well. Have your children memorize your home address.
- Consider having a landline in your home if you have children or live with anyone who needs extra care in case, they must call but are unable to give the address or description of the location. Landlines have the address associated displayed as the location when calling 9-1-1. Cell phones paint a pretty good location picture but aren't always 100% accurate.
- If Deputies are responding to the scene, and you are armed, please let the dispatcher know and follow any directions they give on how to proceed.



Crimes with no suspect or a low solvability rate or just need a case number for documentation or insurance purposes use the ONLINE reporting tool on the HCSO website.

<https://humboldt.gov.org/2545/Sheriffs-Office>

Non-Emergency Calls

707-445-7251

- Vehicle break-in
- Stolen Property
- Mail theft
- Suspicious person
- Drug activity
- Vandalism
- Stolen Vehicle
- Graffiti
- Illegal camping
- Gun shots that are heard only (if screaming or shooting is seen or heard, call 911)
- Suspected child or elder abuse
- Animal Issues
- Panhandling
- Noise complaints
- Fraud/Scammers
- Abandoned vehicle
- Patrol check requests
- Cold assaults, domestic violence
- Welfare Checks
- Fireworks if you know the location of the source

Although every incident is different, here are some examples of situations and what information to provide or will be asked of you (always take safety precautions for yourself and it is okay to not know all the answers):

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Disturbances</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location/Address -Is it verbal or physical -How many people are involved? -Descriptions of people (head to toe, inside out) -Names of people -Any weapons seen -Appear under the influence of anything -Children involved -Did you see this or only hear it? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Suspicious vehicle</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location -Why it's suspicious -Description: color, make, model or type of vehicle (truck, sedan, SUV) -License plate -How many occupants -Direction of travel 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Suspicious Person</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location -Why it's suspicious -Description (head to toe, inside out) -Direction of travel -Any weapons seen -Appears under the influence of anything
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Loose Dog Complaints</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location -Description of dog -Name of owner of the dog -Possible address of where it might live or description of house -Is it vicious? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Noise Complaints/Barking Dog</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location -Type of noise issue -If dog; name of owner -Amount of time or time of day issue happens 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Extra Patrol Requests</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location -Reason for request -Areas of concern to check -Time(s) during day/night -Anything particular to look for -Name and contact information of responsible



Making calls to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office



Once all the necessary information has been provided to the dispatcher, it is appropriate to ask what your options are regarding response and/or give your expectations. This will help the dispatcher to understand what you are requesting, how to dispatch Deputies if appropriate, prompt them to include any special information/directions into the call, and also to clarify any misconceptions about what your options are. Some of those options could be:

- In person response
- Phone contact only
- Anonymity
- Confidentiality
- Desire to seek prosecution vs. just requesting documentation or a check of the circumstances.
- Request for contact after response and in what capacity (in person vs. phone).
- Request for no contact after response.

Contact with a Deputy, in person or via phone, can also be intimidating, especially if the circumstances prompting your call are traumatic. The following are some loose guidelines on navigating this contact to get the best results:

- Stay as calm as possible.
- Respect gets respect. Try not to take your frustrations out on the Deputy or Deputies who responded to help you.
- Let the Deputy know if there are any potential dangers still present. This could include suspects, animals, weapons, etc.
- Let the Deputy know if there is anyone else on scene.
- Be willing to accept some direction from the Deputy on where to stand, what to do or not do, until they are comfortable with the circumstances of the scene. They probably don't know you, and it is their job to assess the safety of the situation before investigating anything. That is for their safety and yours.
- Answer the questions of the Deputy. They may want you to tell your story first, or to answer questions. Let them lead. Be thorough and try not to get frustrated if they don't hear or understand something right.
- Once you have provided your information to the Deputy, ask what your options are, and for any advice regarding those options. The options are many, depending on the circumstances, but below are some of the most common:
 - Make a criminal report.
 - Pursue criminal charges (arrest, citation, or forwarding of case to DA).
 - No report.
 - Incident number only.
 - No further action.



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- After assessing your options, clearly tell the Deputy how you want to proceed, and what your expectations are. Give the Deputy a chance to interpret what you are asking for, and maybe give some clarification if necessary.
- If you are not happy with the response/performance of the Deputy, try to nicely explain this to them, and give them a chance to explain/clarify. Often, there may still be some miscommunication as to how the law and people's expectations line up.
- If after talking with the Deputy, you are still not happy with the outcome, you may request to speak with a supervisor. This request can be made to the Deputy or dispatch but may not be able to be accommodated immediately. When you talk with the supervisor, again, stay calm, and try to be patient. Explain the situation to the supervisor, and how the Deputy did not provide the service you wanted. Give the supervisor time to hear you out, research the situation, and then provide an explanation to you. This might not happen right away. If, after talking with a supervisor, your expectations are still not met, you can request to talk to someone from the administration. This process would start over, but with a Lieutenant, and could go all the way up to the Sheriff if no resolution can be achieved.
- Concurrent but also separate to this process, anyone can file a formal complaint against any HCSO employee, in person, electronically, or by phone, if they feel there has been some misconduct and/or their expectations weren't met.