



Paramedic Chiefs
of Canada
Chefs Paramédics
du Canada

Paramedic Services Week

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Paramedic as Educator: Citizen Ready

Activating 9-1-1 and Screening

Many people do not know what to expect when they call 9-1-1. Most often, it is because of an emergency that involves some panic and fear and learning what happens when an emergency is actively occurring isn't a good time to understand.

Paramedics and Communication Centers (dispatch) that can educate the public so that they are "**Citizen Ready**" will make the experience better and help in gathering the necessary information needed for 9-1-1 services to respond. Being prepared for what will be asked of caller (you) will ease the panic and limit misinformation (or not enough) being shared.

Fear of the unknown is often calmed by understanding what and why the questions asked are asked. For example, understanding that ambulances may utilize GPS systems to send "closest" ambulances to locations will offer some comfort that help is nearby and on its way.

Even understanding that while the call interrogator is asking questions, an ambulance may already be on the way (dispatched) to a call location. Many people believe that ambulances are not sent till after the caller hangs up which often isn't the case.

Learning what is specific to your local communication center and sharing those available resources or deployment steps will give confidence that if the public calls 9-1-1, they will now know what to expect and be best prepared.

Some suggestions to educate the public to know what is in their area might be:

- 1) Communicating what to expect when calling 9-1-1 during a pandemic. Different questions and additional time to ask. This is a necessary safety process.
- 2) Communicating why screening is necessary when you call 9-1-1, when paramedics arrive and also when you arrive at the hospital. Many opportunities to be screened will minimize improperly screened patients.
- 3) Publicize the types of questions that communication centers (dispatch) and paramedics are asking, and why:
 - For the safety of the public (health system), i.e., community safety
 - For the safety of the paramedic responding, i.e., PPE requirements
 - For the safety of the patient, i.e., treatments
- 4) Encourage the uses of self-assessment or screening tools (i.e., apps) to before calling 9-1-1 or non-urgent health lines. Use often and use regularly.
- 5) Encourage answering truthfully and how when you do not answer questions honestly, it affects all those involved in your care and many others. You will not be treated any differently.
- 6) If allowed, show the "faces" behind the "voices" through your social media channels.

