

“Under the Trooper’s Hat”

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Have you ever wondered what happens when you call 911? North Dakota State Radio answers 911 calls for twenty-five North Dakota counties, including Emmons, Kidder, Logan and McIntosh. State Radio is located in Bismarck and is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It coordinates the 911 services of emergency medical, fire, and law enforcement response.

State Radio is the primary dispatch center for the North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) and provides direct assistance to more than 4,000 radio users representing 287 federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. Numerous other counties and cities within the state have their own, more centralized, emergency 911 dispatch centers. State Radio works closely with these other dispatch centers to coordinate emergency response.

When State Radio receives a 911 call, the dispatcher will ask many questions to gain information about the incident. These additional questions will help the dispatcher determine the services needed for your situation. For example, if there is a report of a motor vehicle crash with a person trapped inside a car, the most appropriate response would be police, ambulance, and Fire / Rescue. Each service has specialized tools and training needed to best handle the specific situation.

When calling 911, the most important thing to do is listen to what the operator says, answer their questions to the best of your ability and follow their directions. They will remain on the phone with you until help arrives. If you accidentally get disconnected, they will call you back.

One of the most common questions I get is, “Should I call 911 when I see something suspicious?” The answer is YES. If you see behavior or activity that seems unusual or suspicious, you should call 911. People are not suspicious, behavior is. Although we say “suspicious person,” what we mean is their behavior is suspicious. Suspicious behavior is sometimes difficult to define, but most people say they “know it when they see it.” It is something that seems out of place, not quite right, or just makes you feel ‘weird’ about it.

Citizens are our partners and calls to 911 about illegal or suspicious activity can be anonymous. Don’t worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. Think about what might happen if you do not call. We’d rather investigate a report and find nothing than respond after a crime has been committed, but could have been prevented. If you get a ‘pit in your stomach’ about a situation, call 911. But remember, calling 9-1-1 is for serious situations only.

By calling 911 immediately, law enforcement can possibly prevent or stop criminal activity as it is occurring. Law enforcement is often notified hours, days or even weeks after suspicious activity was observed. Calling immediately allows law enforcement agencies to work together, locate criminals, witnesses, fresh evidence and details that can be lost over time.

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to visit the FAQ section of our website: www.nd.gov/ndhp, like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol or join us on Twitter [@NDHighwayPatrol](https://twitter.com/NDHighwayPatrol) where you can learn more about traffic safety, tips and NDHP news.