

What you would do if you called 911 but didn't get an answer?

Have you ever wondered what you would do if you called 911 but didn't get an answer? Unfortunately, it's very likely 911 or your telephone service has experienced some type of outage in the last few years. If you were lucky, you didn't need 911 during those outages — but what if you did?

We hope this can be a resource for you, so you will know what to do if you need us but can't reach us.

What is an emergency?

An emergency is any situation where there is an immediate threat to life or property that requires assistance from law enforcement, the fire department, or an ambulance. If you are unsure whether your situation is an emergency or not, call 911, and the call-taker will determine whether to handle your call or refer you to the Non-Emergency number.

- Do not dial 911 and hang up, assuming we will send assistance to your location.
- If you call 911 by mistake, do not hang up. Tell the call taker what happened so they know there really isn't an emergency.

What can you do if you have an emergency and call 911, but it rings for a minute and no one answers?

- Don't hang up! Remember that 911 call takers and dispatchers can get very busy. We prioritize incoming 911 calls to answer first, so you may have to wait. Your phone may be ringing but the call hasn't made it into the 911 center.

What can you do if you have an emergency and try to call 911, but you don't have a dial tone or are unable to make the call?

- Ask someone else to call on a different line or device/phone.
- Use a different service provider to make the call. If your cellphone can't get through, try your landline.
- Try texting instead. We are working to implement Text to 911 in Walla Walla, which should be accomplished within six to eight months.

If you have an emergency and all of the above fails, what can you do?

- Call our 10-digit nonemergency number: 509-527-1960.
- If it's not an emergency and you call 911 and can't get through or don't get an answer, try again later.

Whenever you experience any type of service outage, check with your service provider, news outlets, and social media for up-to-date information. For notifications about events here at Walla Walla Emergency Communications (WESCOM), follow us on Facebook at @WallaWallaEM, and sign up for emergency notifications at www.wwemd.info.

Follow the Walla Walla Police Department on Facebook at @WallaWallaPoliceDepartment and on Twitter at @WallaWallaPD.

