

## Quick Reference

Below are the initial questions you will be asked by a police call-taker when you call 911 or the non-emergency number. You can find a more detailed description of these topics inside this pamphlet.

### Where

*Where is the situation occurring?*  
Address or Intersection

### What

*What is going on?*  
Mental Health Situation

### Who

*Who is involved?*  
Name and Relationship

### Weapons

*Are any weapons involved?*  
Guns, Knives, Blunt Objects, etc.

### Description

*What does the person(s) look like?*  
Sex, Race, Height, Weight, Clothing, etc.



This pamphlet was created with the assistance of the following organizations:

**Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Board (ADAMH) of Franklin County**  
447 East Broad St  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: (614) 224-1057



*Our mission is to improve the well-being of our community by reducing the incidence of mental health problems and eliminating the abuse of alcohol and other drugs in Franklin County.*

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Franklin County**  
1225 Dublin Rd, Ste. 110  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: (614) 501-6264



*Our mission is to improve the quality of life and ensure dignity and respect for persons with serious mental illness, and offer support to their families and close friends.*

**Columbus Division of Police**  
120 Marconi Blvd  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Emergency: 911  
Non-Emergency: (614) 645-4545



*We are in service with the purpose to protect, with the passion to persevere, and with the utmost pride in our performance.*

# Calling the Police

*A Guide for Families and Caretakers of Mental Health Consumers*



**Emergency: 911**

**Non-Emergency: (614) 645-4545**



THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

**DIVISION OF POLICE**



## Introduction

The Columbus Police Communications Bureau provides a vital link between the needs of the community and the resources within the Division of Police. Its mission is to evaluate incoming calls for service, determine the nature of the request, and then dispatch the appropriate resources necessary to safely and efficiently provide the service required.

### When do I call 911?

Call 911 if your family member/patient is:

- Actively harming him/herself or another person
- Threatening to harm him/herself or another person
- Armed with a weapon
- Violently destroying property
- Having a medical emergency
- Missing

Call the non-emergency phone number, (614) 645-4545, if you require a police response, but one of the above situations is not currently taking place.

### Has the situation changed?

If you have placed a call to the non-emergency phone number, and your family member/patient's behavior has changed to meet the criteria of a 911 call, please call 911 and provide the updated information. The call-taker will add the additional information to your call for service.

### "911, What is your Emergency?"

Your call will be answered by a trained professional call-taker who follows very specific procedures when gathering information to ensure your call is handled appropriately. Allowing the call-taker to control the call will ensure the best response.

The following basic information is needed to dispatch police assistance. Please be prepared to provide this information at the very beginning of the call:

## Location First

- Address or intersection
- Room number or apartment number
- Type of location (a residence, group home, or medical facility)

### Condition of Person Needing Assistance

- Does the person have a mental illness?
- Is the person using illicit drugs?
- Is the person intoxicated?

This information helps the call-taker properly categorize the call, determine the appropriate service(s), and ensure the correct number of officers are dispatched to the location.

Please be prepared to provide the following additional information about your family member/patient in need of assistance:

### History with Weapons

Responding officers need to be aware of any weapons your family member/patient may currently have or have access to, including any replica or toy weapons.

### Prior Contact with Police

It is helpful if responding officers are aware of any prior positive or negative contact with police.

### "Triggers"

Knowledge of your family member/patient's positive and negative triggers can help responding officers avoid any negative situations and attempt to engage them in a positive way.

### Medication Status

It can help responding officers to know if your family member or patient is prescribed medication, but not currently taking it. Provide how long he or she has not been taking the medication.

### Request a CIT Officer to Respond

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers are specifically trained to handle mental health situations. Please keep in mind that CIT officers are not always available to be dispatched.

## Description

When you call, the call-taker will ask for a description that typically includes the following details:

### Person(s)

- Sex
- Race
- Height and weight
- Hair and eye color

### Clothing

The following specific order is used for clothing descriptions:

- Head to toe
- Inside-out

For example, "a white t-shirt with a black coat, blue jeans, and white shoes."

### Vehicles

The acronym "CYMBALS" is used for vehicle descriptions and stands for:

- **C**olor
- **Y**ear
- **M**ake
- **B**ody style
- **A**nything else (for example, damage, stickers, or odd paint)
- **L**icense plate
- **S**tate

### Call Backs

When you call the police and request officers to respond, a call for service is entered into the computer. If a prolonged delay in the response occurs, you will receive a telephone call from a dispatcher. The dispatcher will advise you that your call is still pending and an officer will be sent as soon as one is available. It is not necessary to continue to call the police for updated or estimated times of arrivals. Due to the nature of police work, it is impossible for a dispatcher to give you a specific time of arrival.