



Greater Harris County
9-1-1 Emergency Network

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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9-1-1: IT'S NOT A GAME Public Awareness Campaign To Minimize Non-Emergency Calls to 9-1-1

Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) announced a new public awareness campaign Thursday, September 7, 2006, that aims at educating citizens on the proper use of the emergency number 9-1-1. The campaign message is, **“Use it....Don't Abuse It, Call Only When a Life is On the Line.”**

Thousands of lives are saved every year with the use of the emergency number 9-1-1; however, there are numerous calls to 9-1-1 every day which are not true emergencies. An emergency is a situation in which police, fire or emergency medical services are needed.

There has been an increase in calls to 9-1-1 over the last year at all of the 9-1-1 call centers in Harris and Fort Bend Counties.

GHC 9-1-1 is launching this bilingual educational campaign to generate quick awareness among new residents as well as others in our community about when to call 9-1-1 and especially when NOT to call 9-1-1. The public awareness campaign places messages on various media including: radio PSAs, billboards, taxi cabs, metro bus cards as well as various printed pieces and community outreach efforts.

“This campaign is a proactive approach to help to ensure the continued successful and efficient delivery of 9-1-1 emergency calls,” said Lavergne Schwender, executive director of GHC 9-1-1 “It is important not to overload the emergency communication system as well as not overloading the community’s public safety resources.” said Schwender.

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Examples of common non-emergency calls to 9-1-1 are: calls about pets, power outages, loud music and parking tickets. Non-emergency calls often burden the emergency communication system and delay the answering of emergency calls such as medical or crime in progress calls.

“GHC 9-1-1 is hopeful that this campaign will help to minimize the non-emergency calls to 9-1-1, allowing for true emergency calls to be answered promptly,” said Sonya Lopez Clauson, public information officer for GHC 9-1-1. “Over the years, GHC 9-1-1 has dedicated resources to remind and educate citizens about the purpose and proper use of the emergency number 9-1-1,” said Lopez Clauson.

GHC 9-1-1 reminds citizens that if they are ever in doubt of whether a situation is an emergency, they should call 9-1-1.

Greater Harris County 9-1-1 is the largest 9-1-1 system in Texas and the second in the U.S. serving 48 cities and the unincorporated areas of Harris and Fort Bend Counties.

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