



Why Proper 9-1-1 Addressing Is Important For Your Safety

What is 9-1-1?

Enhanced 9-1-1 is a lifesaving public safety service. Every land line telephone number has a 9-1-1 address assigned to it. In most cases when you call 9-1-1 the emergency dispatcher can identify your location, telephone number, and the emergency service providers for your location. In addition, the dispatcher can immediately see your location on digital 9-1-1 mapping. This allows the dispatcher to contact the appropriate emergency service provider with the necessary emergency information and location. The dispatcher can also help provide directions to the emergency providers since they have your location shown on a map.

How is 9-1-1 Addressing Assigned?

Every building that has a telephone should have a 9-1-1 address assigned to it so that the dispatcher can see your location on the digital mapping. The actual number assigned is based upon the distance of the driveway location to the intersection of a larger arterial road. The measuring increment is the distance between driveways and is equal to 1/1000th of a mile (or 5.28 feet). So, for example, a driveway 528 feet from the intersection would have a 9-1-1 number of 100.

Do communities have the authority to create 9-1-1 addresses?

Per state statutes, municipalities must identify all building locations and other public and private locations and shall cooperate in the development and maintenance of the necessary 9-1-1 databases. Rules for addressing are established by the Vermont 9-1-1 Board and are used throughout the state. All Vermont towns participate in the Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 system.

What if the 9-1-1 address is incorrect?

If a building does not have a 9-1-1 address or multiple buildings have the same 9-1-1 address or a building has an incorrect 9-1-1 address, the dispatcher is unable to identify the location of the caller based upon the telephone number. This can result in a delayed response time for emergency services.

Why can't a person just use their building and unit numbers as a 9-1-1 location if they are in a multifamily development?

9-1-1 addressing is standardized throughout Vermont so that every building is identifiable by its 9-1-1 number, street and town. Building and unit numbers are not addresses. However, this information can be included as information associated with that address so that the dispatcher knows both the address and any other information that helps identify the building location.

Why is 9-1-1 addressing needed if there are signs identifying buildings and unit numbers?

Signs are only useful if they are visible to the responders. At night, during inclement weather, or when covered by snow, signs do not help find a building. In addition, the caller needs to provide the correct building and unit number which may not be known by a visitor, child or caller stressed by an emergency.

What if a caller does not know their 9-1-1 address?

If a land line is properly identified with a valid 9-1-1 address, the dispatcher knows the location and sees it on a map. If a person is visiting or a young child is calling 9-1-1, they do not need to know their address if the building has an assigned and valid 9-1-1 address.

Does 9-1-1 work from my cell phone?

Yes, all cell phone companies doing business in Vermont have activated 9-1-1 dialing.

When I call 9-1-1 from my cell phone will the dispatchers know where I am?

Cell phones cannot give your exact location like a traditional phone does. The dispatcher can identify your general location based upon the cell tower that is being used. However, with proper 9-1-1 addressing and digital mapping, the dispatcher can assist with determining your location if you are unsure.

If my address is changed to a valid 9-1-1 address, won't my mail stop coming?

No. The postal service maintains their own database of every household where they deliver mail. The local post office is notified any time there is a change in 9-1-1. They then update the postal service database and ask the householder to provide a notice of address change. Incoming mail to an old address is automatically readdressed and still goes to your household for one year. In addition, magazines, delivery services such as UPS, and mail order services are interconnected into the postal service database and are notified of your change if they send mail or parcels to your address. You should notify utilities and other services of your address change within one year. Although this may be inconvenient, delivery services to your household will be better with proper 9-1-1 addressing since many deliveries use 9-1-1 mapping to find households.

How does Fairpoint know 9-1-1 addressing?

Telephone companies are required to only assign valid addresses to new telephone numbers. Annually there is a review of Fairpoint addresses that do not match 9-1-1 addresses. In addition, Fairpoint is notified of all 9-1-1 updates and automatically updates the 9-1-1 address associated with any phone numbers at that location.

Why is Stowe updating some 9-1-1 addressing?

In the past, some invalid 9-1-1 addresses have been incorporated into the 9-1-1 system. These errors can result in delayed emergency response times. With the use of digital mapping, dispatchers can provide valuable location assistance to emergency responders. However, the 9-1-1 addressing needs to be correct for the system to work. The goal is to have 100% valid 9-1-1 addressing to ensure everyone the best possible emergency service.

Who do you contact regarding 9-1-1 addressing in Stowe?

The Stowe 9-1-1 Coordinator is Rich Baker. He can be contacted at 802-253-6141 or at rbaker@townofstowevermont.org.

PROPER 9-1-1 ADDRESSING LEADS TO QUICKER EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES