

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greater Harris County  
9-1-1 Emergency Network

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## 9-1-1 LAUNCHES NEW PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN TO HELP CELL PHONE CALLERS AND DISCOURAGE NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

(HOUSTON, TX) Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) announced today it will be launching its summer public information campaign to educate citizens about the best ways to gain rapid, efficient assistance from emergency responders.

“Summer is traditionally a time when 9-1-1 call centers receive a high volume of calls and the highest incidence of inappropriate calls,” said Sonya Lopez-Clauson, GHC 9-1-1 public information officer. “It makes perfect sense for us to communicate with citizens during this peak period.”

The campaign has two key messages:

**1. When calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone, first give your location (spell street names and describe landmarks) and then give your phone number.** Then, if the call is dropped by the cell service provider, 9-1-1 can call back and also dispatch assistance. “GHC 9-1-1’s wireless location technology is among the best in the nation. But an accurate, precise location description from a caller, together with the technology’s GPS system, helps pinpoint where to send help,” said Lavergne Schwender, executive director of GHC 9-1-1. “Public education has been, and will continue to be, an essential part of our organization’s effort to provide 9-1-1 service as efficiently and effectively as possible.”

**2. Don’t call 9-1-1 for non-emergencies. Save 9-1-1 for those times “when a life is on the line,”** the GHC 9-1-1 slogan for the past several years. Reports indicate that as many as 30% of the calls to 9-1-1 are for non-emergencies, which requires additional call takers, ties up emergency vehicles and generally inflates the cost to run the 9-1-1 system. Examples of non-emergency calls are: to request a ride to the doctor, report stolen property or a crime that is in the past, request help for a broken pipe or other utility, or order an ambulance for a non-life-threatening illness.

The increase in cell phone calls and other new technology devices has made it a constant need to stress the proper use of 9-1-1.

This three-month summer 2008 public information campaign includes radio commercials, traffic radio sponsorships, billboards, Metro bus signs, and taxi advertising. Also, bookmarks with the same messages are being distributed at community events throughout Harris and Fort Bend counties.

For more information on GHC 9-1-1 check the website at [www.911.org](http://www.911.org)

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