

## **CELL PHONES AND 911 SEEMS LIKE A GOOD MIX, SOMETIMES...**

With all the latest technology, the idea of calling 911 in an emergency from your cell phone is a great idea. The newer phones come equipped with a GPS (Global Positioning System) Chip right inside the phone. So if you are calling 911 in an area with the correct technology, the Public Safety Answering Point dispatcher will be able to see where you are calling from and get help to you faster than ever.

Most people do not realize that if you have an old cell phone that is not activated through your local cellular company, you can still dial 911 in an emergency as long as the phone is charged. This is a great idea if that is the only reason you would want to have a cell phone.

There are several problems that arise from dialing 911 from an inactive cellular phone. If the phone is inactive, so is the GPS system in the phone. So the dispatcher answering the phone will not have your location in an emergency. The dispatcher will have to rely on your directions and your knowledge of where the emergency is taking place.

Another problem is if the call is lost during the emergency, the dispatcher does not have a number to call you back because an inactive phone cannot receive any calls. The only thing this phone can do is CALL 911.

One of the most frustrating issues we deal with in dispatch centers is discarded telephones being used by children. There have been several non-emergency 911 calls that have been made from these un-activated cellular phones from children that are playing with the phones and do not realize that they are interfering with other serious emergency calls.

If you are going to allow anyone to “play” with your old cellular phone, PLEASE remove the battery from the phone. Individuals may not realize the problems that are being caused by simply “playing” with the old cellular phone.

If you have any questions regarding this very serious issue, please contact your local Sheriff's Department or 911 Coordinator in your area.