

## EMERGENCY CALLS

1. **General principles.** Emergency calls, which comprise summoning aid in the event of danger to person or property, are best handled by the use of the regular operating practices with only a few supplements designed to expedite reporting the situation to the proper agency. This special treatment of emergency calls consists, basically, of continuous supervision until the case is reported and voluntarily rendering reasonable assistance in summoning aid.

The principles of this special treatment should be familiar to every member of the operating forces. They are listed below, briefly, so they may be easily remembered. If any operator having occasion to handle an emergency call applies these principles and normal good judgment based on her operating experience, the results will be satisfactory.

- a. Give emergency calls your undivided attention.
- b. Establish the connection as quickly as possible, meanwhile summoning your supervisor.
- c. If the called number is not given or is not available at your position, complete the call by name, if possible, i.e., fire, police, etc., or obtain the number from Information yourself.
- d. If the calling party does not remain on the line, report the situation to the proper agency immediately, giving the location from which the call was received as soon as you can ascertain it, or the location of the emergency if known.
- e. Do not delay advancing the call to ask questions unless the calling party at once asks you to make the report for him, or do not interfere with the start of conversation. Generally secure such information as possible regarding the calling number and the location of the emergency while waiting for the called station to answer and abandon all questions as soon as the called station answers.
- f. Waive all requirements in regard to charges that might delay the start of conversation, extending credit until the call has been completed.
- g. Try to secure the release of a busy line or if possible of an out of order line, for the completion of an emergency call.
- h. If you are at a position not equipped to complete emergency calls, direct the call to an "A" operator in the calling office and notify your supervisor, but be sure to report any emergency call that comes to your attention.

In the following material, attempt has been made to outline the scope and the procedures for handling emergency calls without prescribing too definitely either the scope or the procedures. The ways in which emergencies appear and the treatment they should receive are so varied that attempt at precise definition would be inconsistent with the objective of giving assistance where it is required. The following paragraphs, therefore, should be used rather to illustrate some emergency calls and to suggest how they should be handled.

No supervisor's notes are provided, since it is assumed that the operator will, in general, know how to proceed and that the supervisor and operator will function as a team to perform as promptly as possible whatever steps may be required. While in general it is thought that the regular practice gives the best basic procedures for handling most emergency calls, the operator or supervisor is expected to use her judgment consistent with the above principles in disregarding any restrictions which the regular practice places on the services performed on ordinary calls.

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## EMERGENCY CALLS—Continued

**2. Scope of emergency calls.** Whenever it is evident that there is danger to person or property for any reason, treat the situation as an emergency call. The evidence may be the nature of the request, the calling party's manner, or the sounds you hear when you answer a signal. If you are uncertain and the customer is on the line, you may ask if it is an emergency, but in cases of doubt feel free to treat the case as an emergency. Attention and alertness are your best guides in recognizing such situations promptly. Typical cases of emergency calls are listed below to suggest the scope of the definition given above.

A call for the fire or police department on which the calling party indicates that an emergency exists.  
A call on which you hear cries of "Fire" or "Police," or which the customer announces as "Emergency."

A call on which the calling party indicates that he wishes to report, or summon aid for, a flood, accident, forest fire, wreck, explosion, or similar disaster requiring the aid of police, fire department, rescue squad, ambulance, life saving service, militia, or other governmental agency.

A call for a doctor or ambulance on which the calling party indicates that the need is urgent.

A call on which no intelligible response can be gained from the calling party but sounds that you hear indicate the need of immediate assistance from medical, fire, or police agencies.

A call on which the calling party wishes to report a riot, robbery, assault, kidnaping, or other disturbance of the peace, or to give information relative to such an occurrence.

A call to issue a warning against an impending disaster or crime.

A call to report a broken gas or water main, or a wire or pole down.

Other specific cases may be included as emergency calls, covering such matters as power plant failures, and if you are locally instructed to regard all requests for fire and police departments as emergency calls, do so, but do not, however, permit such instructions to obscure the fact that these lists as well as the one above are not inclusive and that you need to be alert for all situations included in the definition.

**3. When you recognize an emergency call.** Always acknowledge the order or report in such a way as to indicate to the calling party that you recognize the call is an emergency and that you expect him to remain at the telephone unless he has already indicated otherwise. Phrases such as "Yes sir, emergency," "Right away," or "I'll try them immediately" are suggested. "Hold the line, please?" can be added when you think it advisable.

Signal your supervisor, preferably by a code ring locally agreed upon to attract her attention at once, but do this as an overlap while working on the call.

Do not release the calling line or trunk for any purpose until told to do so by your supervisor or until you have disposed of the situation completely.

Assume that the calling party will remain on the line if you have communicated with him unless he informs you that he can not. If no connection has been requested but the sound you heard or the report you received indicates that assistance is required, immediately secure the necessary information and try to inform a suitable agency of the situation that has come to your attention.

**4. Establishing connection while the calling party is on the line.** If you are at a position equipped to complete connections at all, try to establish connection at once.

If the call is not given by number, consult your position bulletin for the number if that is necessary to establish connection, or reach Information and secure any numbers that are required. Do not ask the calling party for the number or connect him to Information. If you do not know which of several towns you serve should receive the call, ask the calling party which one he wishes. If direct lines are provided from your switchboard to the called agency, make use of them instead of the usual channels.

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### EMERGENCY CALLS—Continued

#### 4. Continued

As soon as you have advanced the call, or while you are waiting for Information to answer or report, ask the calling party for his number or letter if you do not have it, and the location of the emergency, indicating that you are waiting for the next step to occur, as for example, **"I am ringing the Fire Department. What is your number, please?"** or **"Information is looking for Dr. Brown's telephone. What is your number, please?"** If necessary, explain to the calling party that you wish this information so that if he should leave the telephone, you will be in a position to assist him. Do not permit questions or explanations to delay any step in the advancement of the call.

Remain cut in on the connection after you establish connection.

When the called station answers, abandon all questioning of the calling party, if necessary announce **"Here's your party,"** and supervise the connection to render any assistance necessary. Continue to supervise until you are sure the called party understands the report and has agreed to take action, unless locally directed to cut out when the parties are in satisfactory communication on certain types of emergency calls.

Make no charge or collection on calls to points within the local service area or to authorized agencies listed on your bulletin at "A" board toll points. In any case do not delay completion of the call to discuss charges or to secure deposit but, if necessary to avoid delaying the call, extend credit until the call is completed.

If the called line is busy, do not give the report. On a trunked connection, disconnect the front cord at once, and if the calling party notices the signal explain that the line is busy but that you are trying to secure it. Take steps to cut in on the called line, announce the emergency, and ask if the line may be secured for it, but if you can not cut in have someone associated with the called office do so. In announcing the emergency, explain the situation if necessary and offer to reestablish the existing connection if desired after the emergency has been reported.

If the number of the station to call must be obtained from Information, proceed as follows.

- a. Reach Information. While waiting for an answer, obtain the calling number and, if possible, the location of the emergency.
- b. As soon as Information answers announce the emergency request, as for example, **"Emergency. Near-by doctor for 123 Main Street."** While waiting for the report, continue your effort to obtain the calling number and location if necessary.
- c. Immediately try to reach the number furnished.
- d. Try more than one listing, if necessary, until you have satisfied the requirements of the calling party.

Fill out the ticket entries as rapidly as possible after they become available, as an overlap, and without delaying the progress of the call.

**5. Transmitting a report of an emergency when the calling party is not on the line.** Even though your position may not be equipped to establish connections, you may be called upon to report an emergency.

Obtain the calling number, the location of the emergency, and something of its nature and magnitude if the calling party says that he can not remain on the line any longer. If he hangs up before he has given this information, try to learn the calling number by having the connection traced if you can hold the trunk, or by flashing back if you can do so. If no other means is available and there has been no indication that it would not be advisable to do so, try to ring back on the line or trunk to secure any identifying details possible.

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## EMERGENCY CALLS—Continued

### 5. Continued

Try to reach the proper agency as soon as you have sufficient identifying information, filling in the details of the report as quickly as possible while doing so. If you do not know the proper number to call or can not obtain it from your bulletin, reach Information, obtain it from her, and then proceed with the attempt.

When the called station answers, introduce yourself, say that you received a call, and give essential details of the report as given to you. If the called party agrees to respond, disconnect. If he does not and it seems desirable to do so, ask where you should call and proceed as directed or according to your judgment.

When you have notified a suitable agency, report the fact to the calling party if you can reach him. If you have been unable to secure aid within a reasonable interval and there is prospect of further delay, notify the calling party of the delay, without, however, permitting this step to interfere with your work of attempting to complete the connection.

**6. Reporting indefinite cases of emergency.** You may occasionally encounter indications of an emergency condition even though no communication takes place with the calling party. In such situations, or where you are unable to bring the calling party back to obtain details, feel free to report the case to an appropriate agency by steps such as the following.

a. Hold the calling line if you can.

b. Determine the location of the source of the call. In dial offices test the checking multiple if one is provided or have the connection traced on an emergency basis if switchmen are available. In some cases you can only ring back on the line or in a multiple appearance of it and question the party who answers. In other cases, you may be able to report only the calling office. Where you can ring back and there has been no indication that it would not be advisable to do so, use all the ringing combinations applicable, identify as many stations as answer in response to several rings, and question them briefly as to their knowledge of the call. In order to save time you may start this step while the connection is being traced or the records consulted. Explain to each answering party that you are trying to locate an emergency call and ask him to disregard subsequent rings on his line in the next few minutes as it is necessary to ring all stations in an effort to locate the source of the call. Obtain the address of each station that answers and use this information in connection with the other responses you have received to determine the approximate location of the emergency. If you do not ring back, use the report of the tracing as the best location available.

**Note:** In step-by-step offices of the line switch type prepare a credit ticket whenever you ring back over the assistance trunk on a message rate line.

c. As soon as you receive a definite location or report or as soon as you believe that another attempt to ring would bring no further response, call the proper police department for the neighborhood in which the emergency seems to exist, announce yourself, explain briefly how the call came to your attention, and give the location of the station or stations from which the call must have come, supplying any details requested as fully as you can. If the agency called gives any directions in connection with the case, assist in any way possible.

### 7. Notes on certain specific conditions. (For your guidance in meeting similar situations)

a. Call for an ambulance in a locality where none is available. For the location given, call the local police or state police station designated on your bulletin.

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### EMERGENCY CALLS—Continued

#### 7. Continued

- b. Call reporting gas or water main broken. Consult your bulletin for the proper number to call; if not listed call the police.
- c. Call reporting wires down. If not specified as telephone wires, consult your bulletin for the proper number to call; if not listed call the police. Report the details to repair service in any case.
- d. Call reporting an occurrence not specifically provided for on your bulletin. Call the police for the location given.
- e. Call reporting an occurrence of accident, disaster, or crime, but not requesting assistance. Report the occurrence to the police giving such details as you can obtain regarding the situation.
- f. Called station out of order or does not answer. Verify the condition, always announcing your request as emergency. Explain the situation to the calling party if he is on the line, offering to call any other station he suggests or to send a messenger. If he is not on the line, use your judgment in calling some other agency or in sending a messenger.
- g. Called line busy on an emergency call or customers unwilling to release it. Explain the situation to the calling party and offer to call him, to transmit the details he gives you as soon as the line can be secured, or to take any other possible action desired such as asking the police to reach the desired party.
- h. You are uncertain which of several towns should receive the call for fire or police after questioning the calling party. Connect to the one designated on your bulletin to act as the distributing point for such cases. If none is so indicated, call the one you think most likely to be the one and ask if they take calls for the indicated location. Then proceed according to their reply.
- i. Call for a particular precinct station or fire house. Connect to the line regularly designated for receiving emergency calls.
- j. Call from a rural line requesting help, as for a fire. Consult your record of emergency call numbers by lines, if one is provided, to determine which neighbors to call first.
- k. Another call received from a line being held on an emergency call. Explain that the line is being held for an emergency call and ask the customer to wait unless he also reports an emergency. If necessary, take the details of his call and agree to call him. If you do not have the calling number and the location of the first emergency, ask him for his number and address and any information he may have regarding the situation.

8. **Record.** Each situation given emergency handling, whether a call was made or not, requires a record. This record shows all the important details so as to form an account of the appearance, report, handling, and disposal of the call. Where it is in the form of a ticket, use it so far as possible for all notations concerning the call, keeping it up to date as nearly as possible but in no way permitting it to interfere with the prompt disposal of the case. At final disposal, be sure the record contains as nearly as possible all the following information.

The time the call was received.

The nature of the emergency (as reported to you, as it appeared to you, or as you understood the report given by the calling party).

The calling number.

Location of emergency or address of the calling station.

Action taken, such as agency or agencies connected, etc.

### EMERGENCY CALLS—Continued

#### 8. Continued

Time the report was received by the called agency.  
Explanation of delay or unusual circumstances.  
Initials or personal number of you and your supervisor.

#### 9. Community dial office calls.

##### a. On Calls Which Appear to be Emergencies Originating in Community Dial Offices.

- (1) If completion to the calling office is required and a trunk is available, establish connection at once. If, however, all trunks are busy, try to secure the use of one of them for the emergency call, proceeding in general as in the case where the called line is busy in "4." If no trunk can be secured, immediately obtain the details of the emergency and promise to report it. As soon as the calling party hangs up, release the trunk momentarily, replug, and proceed as for the condition.
- (2) Consult the record for the calling office to see what line or lines are to be called for the emergency involved.
- (3) Feel free to make use of the Company representative in the calling office if you think his knowledge of the town or his presence there would help.

##### b. On Emergency Calls to Community Dial Offices.

- (1) Immediately undertake to establish connection in all cases, even to numbers which the calling party is supposed to dial himself.
- (2) Verify the status of the called station if it is slow in answering, at least by the end of the first minute of ringing. Keep ringing the number but meanwhile ask if there is any other number that could be called. If not, agree to keep trying the called number and do so.
- (3) If the called line is busy and means are not provided for going over the busy, tell the calling party that the line is busy. Ask if there is any other number, such as a near-by station, that could be called, or if you know such a number, suggest it and proceed as directed. If no other number can be called, agree to keep trying until the called number is reached, and then do so.
- (4) Consult the record for the called office for any special treatment that may be provided for the type of emergency involved.

**10. Sender monitor position.** If you are at the sender monitor position, acknowledge the order, substitute the emergency call completing cord for the one used in answering, and supervise for the "A" operator's answer. Remain cut in until you receive a disconnect signal on the cord. The "A" operator will handle the call but if the calling party disconnects before she answers, it will be necessary for you to ring back if she requests it. If, however, the calling party wishes to give you the report, accept and transmit it as in "5."

**11. Emergency call received at a position from which you can not complete calls.** If you are at a position from which you can not complete calls, give the calling party such help as you can, then flash the "A" operator if the call is from a manual office or obtain the calling number and ask the calling party to dial his operator. If you refer him to a dial "A" operator, notify the chief operator of the originating office that an emergency call is coming to the "A" board. Remain on the line or trunk until the distant operator releases it or the calling party disconnects.

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EMERGENCY CALLS - Continued

9. COMMUNITY DIAL OFFICE CALLS. (Supplementing Paragraph 9-a, opposite)  
Emergency calls originating in community dial offices should be handled as provided in this section except for the following equipment considerations.
- a. Where only one office control trunk is provided the details should be secured by the control operator and the customer told that the emergency will be reported for him so that he may be dismissed.
  - b. Where two or more control trunks are provided, establish the connection as outlined in the practice.

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**EMERGENCY CALLS—Continued**

12. **Emergency call received from another operator.** If you are requested simply to establish connection to a number, do so. If you find that the line is busy, give an oral report and add that you are trying to reach the number, notifying your supervisor that you have an emergency call so that she may take steps to secure the called line as soon as possible. If the call was passed by name, complete it if you know the number or have it on your bulletin and can reach the called number through your position, but if you do not have the number obtain it.

If details regarding an emergency and its location or a calling number are passed to you, understand that they are from an operator who is not in a position to complete an emergency call. Proceed as though you had received the call from a customer.