

# 9 1 1 means EMERGENCY

A guide to interacting with individuals who may have autism spectrum disorder during emergency calls

**A person who interacts differently during an emergency call may have autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**

A person with ASD may :

- not be able to understand danger or identify a true emergency
- be unfamiliar with common safety rules and expectations
- have trouble handling disorderly/ disruptive situations
- have difficulty understanding questions or instructions
- get confused by figures of speech
- be easily distracted or upset by noises or other sensory input
- not be able to respond quickly or accurately
- repeat words or phrases and/or speak out of context (may seem as rude)
- become anxious or withdrawn
- be more interested in physical environment rather than people
- not understand the consequences of actions
- act unexpectedly or compulsively
- not understand or acknowledge pain

## During a 9 1 1 call, if you suspect that a person may have ASD:

- use short, simple sentences
- ask straightforward questions to help identify the real danger(s)
- clarify the person's understanding each time an instruction is given
- don't speak too forcefully or loudly
- avoid using slang, sarcasm, or complex language
- try to keep the conversation on topic
- pause in between statements to allow for processing (allow sufficient time for response)
- respect the person at all times, no matter how he or she may respond

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Autism Awareness



Get more information  
about autism and safety at

[www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness](http://www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness)

or email

[KohlsAutismAwareness@childrens-specialized.org](mailto:KohlsAutismAwareness@childrens-specialized.org)

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