

# 911 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 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- become anxious or withdrawn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 , feel, 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 sufficient time for the person to formulate a response)
- respect the person at all times, no matter how he or she may respond

---

Get more information  
about autism and safety at  
[RWJBH.org/CSH](http://RWJBH.org/CSH)

**RWJBarnabas**  
HEALTH

**Children's  
Specialized  
Hospital**



**KOHL'S**  
Cares 

This program is made possible by  
[Children's Specialized Hospital](#)  
through the generosity of Kohl's Cares.

