

On BHI Call 911 *Even if it's Not an Emergency!*

Many of us grew up learning to call 911 for emergencies only. While that may be the case to this day, in many areas of the nation, calling 911 during a non-emergency situation on Bald Head Island is an okay thing to do, in fact, it's encouraged!

Bald Head Island's 911 calls go to the Brunswick County 911 Call Center. In the past, there was a non-emergency number that could be used to reach the call center, this number is no longer being publicized. This is because the non-emergency line is answered by the same dispatchers who receive 911 calls. The first question the dispatchers ask is, "is this call an emergency?" Then the call is prioritized and dispatched based on the caller's answer to that question. If the call center is receiving many calls at once, a non-emergency caller may be placed on hold until the lines are freed up to handle the non-emergent situation.

Using the 911 number allows the calls to be tracked and the call log information is very important to the Village. Tracking the types of calls that are coming in is valuable to the Department of Public Safety. It helps the department determine where to put its resources and it can drive its training, equipment, and even its staffing and scheduling throughout the peak and non-peak seasons. It also gives an accurate record of the department's response rates. The calls are recorded and transcribed so if there are any discrepancies, i.e., time of call, directions, statements, etc., there is an accurate record to be used if the incident results in further investigation.

Examples of non-emergency situations in which you would call 911:

- Lost/stolen property
- Found property that cannot be taken to the Department of Public Safety
- Missing pets
- Report of a minor ordinance violation (litter, vandalism, walking on dunes/jetties, leash laws, beach equipment, parking/ICE)
- Any time that you need an officer to come to you

One question folks may have, is what to do if you are not on Bald Head Island, but you know of an emergency happening there? For example, you are notified by your alarm company or security camera that there is an intruder in your home on Bald Head Island, but you are at your off-island residence. This is one of the rare times that it is okay to use the non-emergency phone number of (910) 253-7490 to contact the Brunswick County 911 Call Center. When you call, explain to the operator that you are calling from out of state, but that you own property on Bald Head Island and are reporting potential criminal activity. This will be the quickest way for Public Safety to be dispatched.

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Office's 9-1-1 communications webpage has some more information and tips about using 911 go to this link:

<https://www.brunswicksheriff.com/divisions/911-communications>.

Certainly, there will be some instances in which Islanders will need to contact the Department of Public Safety and it should not be dispatched through the 911 call center. Here is an example of some calls that should be made during office hours (Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.).

- Questions about golf cart registrations, ICE permits, beach bonfire permits, knock boxes, ordinances specific to BHI, vial of life/file of life program, Doshier Clinic, and Public Service Auxiliary, and citation payments.
- Complaints, concerns, praise from citizens regarding the performance of public safety employees.

Calls to the Department of Public Safety's main number (910-457-5252) are answered by staff during business hours. After-hours, Islanders can leave a message and that call will be returned by the following business day.

Please also note that if you encounter injured wildlife on Bald Head Island, you should call the Bald Head Island Conservancy's 24/7 hotline at 457-0089 ext. 5. Wildlife can transmit diseases, so please do not touch the wildlife.