



Wireless 9-1-1 Tragedies

The following stories are examples of actual tragedies in which 9-1-1 was called from wireless telephones, and the callers could not be located:

- **Rochester, NY** -- A 19-year-old female college student was abducted from a suburban shopping plaza and driven around, assaulted and murdered by her attacker. The victim was able to dial 9-1-1 from her wireless phone during the attack, and operators listened as it occurred, struggling to figure out where she was. The victim's father, David Koon, has since become a community activist and Assemblyman in NY State, and has supported statewide efforts to appropriate money for Wireless 9-1-1 Phase I and II.
- **Miami, FL** -- The story of Karla Gutierrez's drowning quickly gained national coverage after she dialed 9-1-1 on her wireless phone from her sinking car in a Miami canal. Unable to escape the car and with dispatchers unable to locate the scene of Gutierrez's accident, the woman perished before emergency help could reach her.
- **Atlanta, GA** -- Esther Green, wife of New York Jets defensive back Victor Green, was abducted with her 10-month-old daughter by carjackers in April of 1999. She was able to call 9-1-1 secretly from her cell phone and drop discreet hints about where she was. It took police twenty minutes to decipher her hints, catch up with the suspects, and free Green and her daughter.
- **Santa Fe, NM** -- Officials were unable to respond promptly to a White Rock woman's request for help after she dialed 9-1-1 from a cell phone. The woman, who had been brutally beaten by her boyfriend, was able to convey the nature of her injuries, but not her location. The dispatcher was forced to keep guessing until he established the exact whereabouts of the woman. In the middle of the call, the angry boyfriend returned and seconds later the phone was disconnected.
- **Fort Lauderdale, FL** -- Denise Murray was forced to wait seven minutes and make three separate 9-1-1 calls from her cellular phone before help was dispatched after her daughter was impaled by a three-foot steel rod that had crashed through their windshield. Murray was forced to exit the interstate and find a major intersection in order to give the dispatchers her location.
- **Littleton, CO** -- Law enforcement officials wasted valuable time securing a gym during the Columbine High School crisis after a prank caller from outside the school told the dispatcher that a victim there was bleeding to death. Officials were unable to determine which of the dozens of cell phone calls they received during the crisis came from inside the school.

- **Day County, SD** – Karen Nelson spent 40 hours in temperatures that dropped to 30 degrees below zero when a blizzard stranded her in her pickup truck. Although Nelson was able to dial 9-1-1, she was unable to tell her rescuers where she was. While the Day County Sheriff's office was eventually able to locate the car, it took them five hours to place the vehicle within a 35-mile radius.
- **Orlando, FL** – A man collapsed on the West Orange Trail and died of a heart attack. A bystander called 9-1-1 from her cellular phone but was confused about her exact location on the trail. By the time rescuers were able to locate the caller the man was dead.
- **Lansing, MI** – A woman's 9-1-1 call was punctuated by screams as her ex-husband brutally stabbed her to death. The police were unable to pinpoint the location of the call until after she was dead.
- **San Jose, CA** – After Zoya Moghaddas smashed her car into a tree, she dialed 9-1-1 from her cellular phone. Moghaddas was bleeding so profusely she couldn't see and was unable to tell her rescuers where she was. She was then forced to wait for almost an hour before police were able to locate her.
- **Fort Wayne, IN** – Jon Charleston died after it took authorities two hours to locate his overturned car in a ditch. Charleston had called 9-1-1 from his cellular phone.
- **Rural Michigan** – Shira Levine was rear-ended and suffered minor damages while driving in rural Michigan. While no one was injured, she did call 9-1-1. She informed the dispatcher of her location and then waited 30 minutes for the cruiser to arrive. When he failed to materialize, she called again. The two roads she had given to the dispatcher to help them locate her actually crossed twice in two spots, and the cruiser was looking at the wrong intersection.
- **New Jersey** – Police have been unable to trace a series of false bomb threats in southern New Jersey because they were made from untraceable cell phones.

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