

Fire Service Communications

Guide Card Set

Select a category to navigate to the appropriate guide card.

A-Z Quick Index

All Callers Interrogation

Fire-Related Incidents

Rescue-Related Incidents

HAZMAT-Related Incidents

Other Fire Service Incidents

Exit Protocol



LEGAL DISCLAIMER: These guide cards are intended for **training purposes only**.

A-Z Quick Index

Type or scan to find your guidecard fast.

A

Aircraft Fire / Emergency

Alarms

All Callers Interrogation

Animal Rescue

Assist Other Agencies / Mutual Aid

B

Boat / Marine Fire

Bomb Threat

Brush / Grass / Wildland Fire

Building Collapse

C

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Check Call / Welfare / Service Call

Chimney Fire

Confined Space Rescue

D – E

Disaster / Environmental / Mass Casualty

Drowning / Water Rescue

Electrical Fire

Electrical Hazard

Elevator Rescue

Environmental / Disaster Incidents

Exit Protocol

Explosive Incidents

F

Fire — Apartment / Multi-Unit

Fire — Commercial / Restaurant / Retail

Fire — High Rise

Fire — Hospital / Hotel / Nursing Home / School

Fire — Residential

Fuel Spill / Leak (Small)

Fumes / Gas Leak / Odor

G – H

Gas Leak / Odor

Grease Fire

Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)

High Angle Rescue (Rope)

High Rise Fire

Hospital Fire

Hotel Fire

I – L

Incendiary Device

Industrial Entrapment

Investigative (Odor / Smoke / Water Leak / Lightning)

Lift Assist

Lightning Strike

Lockout / Forced Entry

M – N

Manhole Emergency

Marine Fire

Mass Casualty Incident

Medical Call

Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)

Mutual Aid

Non-Structural Fire (Small)

Non-Structural Fire (Large)

Nuclear Incidents

Nursing Home Fire

P – R

Power Lines / Wires Down

Propane Incident — Commercial

Propane Incident — Residential

Rope Rescue (High Angle)

S

Search and Rescue

School Fire

Sinking / Submerged Vehicle

Spill / Fluid Leak / Fuel Spill

Structure Fire — Apartment / Multi-Unit

Structure Fire — Commercial / Restaurant / Retail

Structure Fire — High Rise

Structure Fire — Hospital / Hotel / Nursing Home / School

Structure Fire — Residential

Suspicious Incident

Suspicious Package

T – V

Train / Rail Derailment

Trench Rescue

Vehicle Fire

Vehicle — Submerged / Sinking

W – Z

Water Rescue / Drowning

Watercraft in Distress

Welfare Check

Wildland Fire

Wires Down / Power Lines

[Main Menu](#)

All Callers Interrogation

 Ask **every caller** these questions before proceeding to an incident-specific guide card.

1. Where is the **location** of the emergency/incident?
2. Where are **you** in relation to the incident?
3. What is the **phone number** you are calling from?
4. What is your **first and last name**?
5. What is your emergency? Tell me **exactly what is happening**?

Main Menu

Fire Incidents

Rescue Incidents

HAZMAT Incidents

Other Incidents

Exit Protocol

Fire-Related Incidents

Alarms

Boat / Marine Fire

Brush / Grass / Wildland Fire

Chimney Fire

Electrical Fire

Grease Fire

Structure Fire - Apartment / Multi-Unit

Structure Fire - Commercial / Restaurant / Retail

Structure Fire - High Rise

Structure Fire - Hospital / Hotel / Nursing Home / School

Structure Fire - Residential

Non-Structural Fire (Small)

Non-Structural Fire (Large)

Vehicle Fire

[Main Menu](#)

Rescue-Related Incidents

Aircraft Fire / Emergency

Building Collapse

Confined Space Rescue

Elevator Rescue

High Angle Rescue (Rope)

Industrial Entrapment

Manhole Emergency

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Search and Rescue

Submerged / Sinking Vehicle

Train and Rail Derailment

Trench Rescue

Water Rescue

[Main Menu](#)

HAZMAT-Related Incidents

Environmental / Disaster / Mass Casualty

Explosive Incidents

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Fumes / Gas Leak / Odor

Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)

Nuclear Incidents

Propane Incidents - Commercial

Propane Incidents - Residential

Suspicious Package / Bomb Threat / Incendiary Device

[Main Menu](#)

Other Fire Service Incidents

9-1-1 Unknown / Assist Other Agencies / Mutual Aid

Check Call / Welfare / Service Call / Animal Rescue

Electrical Hazard

Spill / Fuel Leak (Small)

Investigative

Lockout / Forced Entry

Medical Call / Lift Assist

Power Lines / Wires Down

Suspicious Incident

[Main Menu](#)

Exit Protocol

Routine Disconnect

Stay on the Line

Urgent Disconnect

Stay on the Line Protocol

If it's safe to do so:

- Keep all bystanders away from the area.
- Have someone meet and direct responding units to the scene.
- Do not approach or enter any hazardous or dangerous areas.
- I'm going to let you go now.
- Help is being sent.
- If anything changes before responders arrive, call us back immediately.

Routine Disconnect

Stay on the Line

Urgent Disconnect

Stay on the Line Protocol

Consider staying on the line with the caller as long as doing so does not threaten officer safety or hinder the call-taker's ability to process other calls.

Reasons to stay on the line:

- Caller is in immediate danger
- Caller's condition may change
- Additional information may be needed
- Caller needs ongoing reassurance and guidance

Routine Disconnect

Stay on the Line

Urgent Disconnect

Stay on the Line Protocol

If you must disconnect urgently:

- Advise the caller that help is on the way.
- Tell them to call back if anything changes.
- Disconnect.

Do NOT stay on the line if it prevents you from processing other emergency calls.

Routine Disconnect

Stay on the Line

Urgent Disconnect

Stay on the Line Protocol

STAY ON THE LINE when the caller:

- Is in immediate physical danger
- Needs continuous medical instruction
- Is the victim of a crime in progress
- Is emotionally distressed and at risk

Advise caller:

- Do not hang up
- Stay where you are if safe
- Follow all instructions given
- Responders are on the way

Alarms

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Where is the alarm? (What area or zone/room was activated?) - What type of fire alarm? (Thermal, smoke, water flow, trouble, other) If Carbon Monoxide — go to Carbon Monoxide guide card - Is there any visible smoke or fire? (Colour of smoke/fire) If yes, proceed to appropriate Fire Related guide card - What type of building? (Residential, commercial, industrial, multi-dwelling) - How many floors/stories in the building? - What floor is the alarm activation on? - Is there anyone in the building? - Any known injuries? If reported by an Alarm Monitoring company: - What is your company name and account number? - Has the occupant been notified? What was the response? - Has anyone been dispatched to the location?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Private Caller: - Do not re-enter the building. - Meet responding units at the entrance. - Do not use elevators. - Keep people away from the building. - Call us back if you see smoke or fire. Commercial / Industrial / Multi-Dwelling: - Activate your emergency plan. - Do not re-enter the building. - Assist with evacuating occupants if safe to do so. - Have someone meet and direct responding units. - Do not use elevators. Alarm Monitoring Company: - Keep the line open if possible. - Advise your contact at the location to evacuate. - Do not send anyone back inside.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is there a sprinkler system? Is it activated? - Is there a fire watch on duty? - Has the alarm sounded before (false alarm history)? - Is the building occupied or unoccupied? - What is the status of the occupants? - Is there a Knox Box or key storage on site? - What is the best entrance to use? Dispatch Priorities: - Treat all alarms as actual fire until determined otherwise - Confirm dispatch of appropriate units per local protocol		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Alarm Types: Smoke Detector Activation — Ionization or photoelectric Heat Detector Activation — Fixed temp or rate-of-rise Water Flow Alarm — Sprinkler activated Trouble Alarm — System fault/malfunction Carbon Monoxide Alarm — Redirect to CO guide card Pull Station — Manual activation Note: All alarms should be treated as actual fires until fire crews confirm otherwise. Do not downgrade response based on caller statements alone.		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Boat / Marine Fire

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? - Is boat in port, in water, or in drydock? If in water: What is the exact location or GPS coordinates? If in port: Dock/pier number? - How many people are on board? - Anyone trapped? Number? Location? - Any injuries? Number? Type? Severity? - What exactly is burning? Colour of smoke/fire? - Is fire spreading? How quickly? - What size is the vessel? Type of vessel?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Get everyone off the vessel immediately if safe to do so. - Do NOT jump into the water unless absolutely necessary. - If you must enter the water, stay together and signal for help. - Do not re-board the vessel. - If in port — move to the dock and away from the vessel. - Use life preservers if available. - Signal other vessels or shore personnel for assistance. - Call us back if the fire spreads or conditions change.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- What is the name/registration of the vessel? - What type of fuel does the vessel use? - Are there any flammable materials or fuel tanks on board? - Is the vessel anchored or drifting? - What is the weather and sea/water condition? - Are there other vessels in the vicinity? - Is the Coast Guard aware? Supplemental Resources: - Notify Coast Guard if vessel is in navigable waters - Marine fire requires specialized suppression equipment		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Marine fires spread quickly due to fuel, fiberglass, and confined spaces - Vessels may have LPG/propane on board — explosion risk - Fuel tanks may be in the hull — approach with caution - Notify Coast Guard and/or Marine Patrol for water-based vessels - GPS coordinates are critical for locating vessels on open water - Drydocked vessels are treated similarly to structure fires		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Brush / Grass / Wildland Fire

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - What is the exact location? Landmarks? (Attempt to get specific location using geographical features) - What is burning? What is the approximate size of the area involved? - Any structures in danger? Exposures? Is fire threatening anything? - Is the fire spreading? In what direction? - What are the wind conditions? Speed and direction? - Is anyone injured or trapped? - Has an evacuation order been issued?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
No Evacuation Order Issued: - Stay informed and monitor your local emergency alert system. - Be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. - Do not attempt to fight the fire yourself. - Keep roads clear for emergency vehicles. - If smoke becomes heavy, go indoors and close windows. Evacuation Order Issued: - Leave NOW — do not delay. - Take your emergency kit, medications, and important documents. - Follow designated evacuation routes. - Do not return until authorities say it is safe. - Alert neighbors if safe to do so. - Close all windows and doors before leaving.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is this a rubbish fire, debris burn, or naturally occurring wildfire? - Child playing with fire? (Document and advise supervisory) - Is there aerial access (helicopter landing zone nearby)? - Are there power lines in the area? - Are there any chemical storage facilities, propane, or fuel in the fire path? - What is the terrain like — flat, hilly, canyon? Scripted Preliminary Dispatch: <i>"Units are being dispatched to a brush fire at [location]. Approximate size [X]. Fire is spreading [direction]."</i> Supplemental Dispatch: Additional resources as per local protocol based on fire growth and threat to structures.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Wildland fires spread rapidly with wind changes — reassess frequently - Spot fires ahead of main fire front are common - Request aviation (air tanker/helicopter) early if terrain allows - Monitor for structure threats and coordinate evacuations with law enforcement - Document wind speed, humidity, and fuel type if reported - Children playing with fire — notify supervisor, document for follow-up - Rubbish fires may require investigation for arson		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Chimney Fire

Vital Points Questions

Pre-Arrival Instructions

Inquire of Caller

Useful Information

- Are you in a safe place?
- Is there any fire visible outside the chimney? (Flames coming from top?)
- Is there smoke or fire inside the house?
- What type of fireplace/stove? (Wood-burning, gas, pellet?)
- Is the fireplace currently in use?
- What is the construction of the home? (Wood frame, brick, other?)
- Anyone in the home? Any injuries?
- Has this happened before?

Vital Points Questions

Pre-Arrival Instructions

Inquire of Caller

Useful Information

1. Do not use the fireplace — stop adding fuel.
2. If safe to do so, close the fireplace damper to reduce air supply.
3. Do not throw water into the fireplace — this can cause steam burns or spread ash.
4. Get everyone out of the home.
5. Leave doors and windows closed to prevent drafts.
6. Meet responding units outside.
7. Call us back immediately if fire spreads inside the home.

Vital Points Questions

Pre-Arrival Instructions

Inquire of Caller

Useful Information

- When was the chimney last cleaned/inspected?
- What type of fuel has been burned? (Green/wet wood, manufactured logs?)
- Is there a creosote buildup visible?
- Are there any combustible materials near the fireplace or chimney?
- Has the smoke alarm activated?
- What floor is the fireplace on?

Useful Information:

- Chimney fires can spread to the structure through damaged flues
- Check attic and roof for extension of fire
- Creosote buildup is the primary cause — burns at extremely high temps

Vital Points Questions

Pre-Arrival Instructions

Inquire of Caller

Useful Information

- Chimney fires can burn at temperatures exceeding 1,100°C / 2,000°F
- Creosote buildup from burning green/wet wood is the primary cause
- Fire can spread through cracks in the flue to surrounding structure
- Annual chimney inspection and cleaning is recommended
- Chimney fires may appear to self-extinguish but can smolder in walls
- Thermal imaging camera useful for checking for extension
- Check attic space directly above the chimney for fire spread

Main Menu

Fire Incidents

Exit Protocol

Electrical Fire

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - Where exactly is the fire? (Room, wall, panel, appliance?) - What is burning? Is there smoke visible? - What colour is the smoke? - Is the fire spreading? - What type of building? How many floors? - Is anyone injured or trapped? - Has the power been shut off? - Is the electrical panel accessible?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Get everyone out of the building NOW. - Do NOT use water on an electrical fire. - Do NOT touch any electrical equipment or wiring. - If safe, turn off the main power at the breaker panel. - Do not re-enter the building. - Meet responding units at the entrance. - Call us back immediately if fire spreads.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- What appliance or area caused the fire? (Panel, outlet, appliance, wiring?) - Are there any downed power lines involved? - Is the building commercial or residential? - How old is the wiring in the building? - Are there any hazardous materials stored in the area? - Is there a generator on site?		
Useful Information: - Notify utility company if transformer or external power lines are involved - Do not enter until power is confirmed off by utility		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Never use water on energized electrical equipment - Electrical fires can re-ignite even after appearing extinguished - Arc flash can travel significant distances - Utility company notification may be required to shut off power - Hidden wiring fires in walls are common — thermal imaging essential - CO2 or dry chemical extinguisher appropriate for electrical fires (Class C) - Document breaker panel location and utility shutoff for responding units		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Grease Fire

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - Where exactly is the fire? (Stove, deep fryer, oven, hood/duct?) - Has the fire spread beyond the cooking area? - What type of building? (Residential, restaurant, commercial kitchen?) - Is anyone injured or trapped? - Is there visible smoke filling the room? - Has the cooking appliance been turned off? - Has the fire suppression system (Ansul) activated?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Get everyone out of the building. Do NOT use water on a grease fire — it will cause an explosion. - If safe and fire is small — slide a lid over the pan and turn off the heat. Do NOT move a burning pan. - If you have a Class K or dry chemical extinguisher, use it ONLY if trained. - Leave the building and do not re-enter. - Meet responding units at the entrance. - Call us back if the fire spreads.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is this a residential or commercial/restaurant kitchen? - Has the hood suppression system (Ansul) activated? Did it extinguish the fire? - What type of cooking oil was in use? - Is the cooking appliance gas or electric? - Are the hood vents/ducts involved? - Has anyone attempted to extinguish the fire? Useful Information: - Commercial kitchen fires require coordination with building management - Ansul system activation should be confirmed by fire crews - Duct fires above the hood can extend to the roof		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Grease fires burn at very high temperatures and re-ignite easily - Water causes a violent steam explosion with burning grease - Class K extinguisher is the correct type for commercial cooking fires - Autoignition temp of cooking oil: ~360°C / 680°F - Hood duct fires can spread to the roof — check for extension - Commercial kitchens require annual Ansul system inspection - Grease trap fires are also possible in commercial settings		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Structure Fire — Apartment / Multi-Unit

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - What is the exact address including unit/apartment number? - What floor is the fire on? What floor are you on? - What exactly is burning? Is there smoke or flames? - Is the fire in the hallway or common area? - How many units are in the building? Approximate occupancy? - Is anyone trapped? How many? Location? - Any injuries? Number? Type? Severity? - Are occupants evacuating?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Caller NOT Trapped: - Leave your unit NOW — close the door behind you (do NOT lock). - Do NOT use the elevator — use the stairs. - Pull the fire alarm if not already activated as you exit. - Do not go back to retrieve belongings. - Meet units at the main entrance. - Alert other occupants as you exit if safe to do so. - If hallway is smoke-filled, use an alternate exit.		
Caller TRAPPED: - Stay calm — close all doors between you and the fire. - Seal gaps under doors with towels or clothing. - Signal from a window — wave clothing or shine a light. - Do NOT jump unless fire is at your door. - Call out from window to alert responders. - Stay low if smoke enters the room.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is there a fire alarm or sprinkler system in the building? - Has the fire alarm sounded? - Are sprinklers activating? - Is there a building manager or superintendent on site? - What is the best entrance for responding units? - Is there a Knox Box on site? - Are there elderly, disabled, or mobility-impaired residents?		
Supplemental Resources: - High-occupancy buildings may require additional EMS - Red Cross notification for displaced residents		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Apartment fires spread quickly via hallways, elevator shafts, and ventilation - Fire on lower floors poses evacuation risk for all upper floors - Confirm if building has fire-resistive construction - Stairwells should be pressurized in high-rise buildings - Utility shutoff locations should be provided to incident command - Document number of units and estimated number of occupants - Consider shelter-in-place vs full evacuation based on floor and fire location		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Structure Fire — Commercial / Restaurant / Retail

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - Exact address? Name of business? - What is burning? Flames or smoke only? - What colour is the smoke? - Which part of the building is involved? - How many floors? Which floor is the fire on? - Is anyone still inside? How many? - Anyone trapped? Injuries? - Has the building been evacuated?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Caller NOT Trapped: - Activate your fire emergency plan — evacuate the building. - Pull the nearest fire alarm if not already sounding. - Do NOT use elevators — use stairs. - Account for all staff and visitors. - Meet responding units at a designated assembly point away from the building. - Do NOT re-enter for any reason. - Call us back if conditions change.		
Caller TRAPPED: - Close all doors between you and the fire. - Seal door gaps with clothing or materials. - Signal from a window. - Stay low if smoke enters. - Do not jump — wait for rescue.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is there a fire suppression system (sprinklers, Ansul)? Is it activated? - What type of business? (Restaurant, warehouse, retail, industrial?) - Are there any hazardous materials on site? - What is the business name and contact person? - Is there a night watchman or security on site? - What is the best entrance for fire apparatus?		
Alarm Types: - Water flow alarm — sprinkler activated - Smoke detector — area of activation? - Manual pull station — who activated and why? - Heat detector activation		
Scripted Preliminary Dispatch: <i>"Units are dispatched to a structure fire — commercial occupancy at [address]."</i>		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Commercial buildings may contain hazardous materials — document type and location - Large open floor plans allow rapid fire spread - High fuel load in warehouses and industrial occupancies - Roof collapse risk in older commercial construction - Utility shutoffs (gas, electric) must be relayed to IC - Night or weekend fires may mean unoccupied building — confirm - Restaurant hood duct fires can extend to roof - Consider adjacent exposure buildings		

Structure Fire — High Rise

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - What is the exact address? - What floor are you on? What floor is the fire on? - What exactly is burning? Flames or smoke only? - What colour is the smoke? - What section of the floor is involved? - What type of building? (Residential, office, hotel, mixed use?) - Is anyone trapped? How many? What floor? - Any injuries? - Has the fire alarm sounded? Are sprinklers activating? <i>If appropriate:</i> - Is there a fire warden or building emergency team activated? - What is the floor above the fire reporting?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Caller NOT Trapped: - Do NOT use elevators. - Move to the nearest stairwell and descend. - If stairwell is smoke-filled, go to the floor above the fire and wait for instructions. - Close all doors as you exit — do NOT prop them open. - Pull fire alarm on your way out if not already sounding. - Report to building assembly point. Caller TRAPPED: - Stay in your unit or office — close all doors. - Seal gaps under doors with towels or clothing. - Call from a window or balcony to signal rescuers. - Do NOT jump. - Stay low if smoke enters. - Call us back if smoke increases or fire reaches your location.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is the building equipped with a fire command center? - Are stairwells pressurized? - Is there a building fire warden system in place? - Is the fire in a residential or office portion? - What is the best lobby entrance for fire apparatus? - Is there a sky lobby or transfer floor? Alarm Types: - Water flow — sprinkler activated, which zone? - Smoke detector — floor and zone - Pull station — who and why? Supplemental Resources: - High-rise fires require specialized resources - Establish command at lobby — relay floor number to IC		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- High-rise fires: buildings over 7 stories or 23 meters/75 feet - Stack effect causes smoke to travel rapidly through elevator shafts and stairwells - Floors immediately above the fire are most at risk from smoke - Defend-in-place strategy may apply for non-threatened floors - Fire attack typically from two floors below the fire floor - Evacuation of all floors is rarely necessary — coordinate with IC - Elevators must be recalled to ground floor and taken out of service - Helicopter roof rescue is a last resort only		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Structure Fire — Hospital / Hotel / Nursing Home / School

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - Exact address? Name of facility? - What type of facility? (Hospital, hotel, nursing home, school?) - What exactly is burning? Flames or smoke? - Which part of the building? Which floor? - How many people are in the building? - Anyone trapped or unable to self-evacuate? - Any injuries? - Has the facility emergency plan been activated?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Caller NOT Trapped: - Activate your facility's fire emergency plan immediately. - Alert staff and begin evacuation or defend-in-place per protocol. - Do NOT use elevators. - Account for all patients/guests/students. - Assign staff to assist mobility-impaired individuals. - Meet responding units at the main entrance. - Keep all access roads clear.		
Caller TRAPPED: - Close all doors between you and the fire. - Seal gaps under doors. - Signal from a window. - Stay low if smoke enters. - Do NOT leave if the corridor is smoke-filled.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Hospital: - What ward or department is involved? - Are there patients on life support or in surgery? - Is the facility on internal emergency protocol (code red)?		
Hotel: - What floor is the fire on? How many floors total? - Is the hotel fully occupied? - What is the best entrance for fire apparatus?		
Nursing Home: - How many non-ambulatory residents? - Is there staff available to assist evacuation? - Are oxygen tanks in the area of fire?		
School: - Is school in session? How many students? - Has lockdown or evacuation been initiated? - What is the assembly point?		
ALL: What is the best entrance to use?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Hospital: Horizontal evacuation — move patients to safe zones on same floor. Vertical evacuation is last resort.		
Hotel: High occupancy, sleeping guests may not respond to alarms. Security can assist with room-by-room check.		
Nursing Home: Many residents are non-ambulatory. Requires significant staff/fire resources. Oxygen enriched environments are high explosion risk.		
School: Account for all students via class lists. Assembly area must be away from building and access routes.		
All facilities: Confirm if building has a fire safety director or designated incident commander on site.		

Structure Fire — Residential

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? Can you escape? - What is the exact address including any apt/unit number? - What exactly is burning? Smoke or flames visible? - What colour is the smoke? - Which part of the house is on fire? (Kitchen, bedroom, garage?) - Is anyone still inside? How many? - Anyone trapped? Location in house? - Any injuries? Type and severity? - Are there any pets inside?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Caller NOT Trapped: - Get everyone out of the house NOW. - Close all doors behind you as you leave. - Do NOT go back inside for any reason. - Meet responding units at the end of the driveway or street. - If you have a home sprinkler system — it should activate automatically. - Call us back immediately if anyone is still inside. Caller TRAPPED: - Stay calm — close all doors between you and the fire. - Seal door gaps with towels, sheets, or clothing. - Go to a window and signal for help. - Do NOT jump from upper floors unless fire is at your door. - Stay low — smoke rises. - We will stay on the line with you.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is the home a single family, duplex, or multi-unit? - What construction type? (Wood frame, brick, manufactured/mobile home?) - Is there a basement? Is that where the fire is? - Are there any propane tanks, gas cylinders, or stored fuel on the property? - Is there a garage attached to the home? - Are there any medical oxygen systems inside? - What is the best access route? Supplemental Resources: - Mobile/manufactured homes burn faster — advise early evacuation - Note any access issues (gated, narrow roads, long driveways)		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Residential fires are the most common structure fire type - Modern furnished homes can flashover in under 3 minutes - Sleeping occupants may not awaken — nighttime fires are more deadly - Attached garages significantly increase fire spread risk - Hoarding conditions create extreme hazards for entry - Manufactured/mobile homes have shorter collapse times — communicate to crews - Pets trapped inside — document and advise IC - Propane tanks, barbecue cylinders, or fuel cans on property — relay to IC		

Non-Structural Fire (Small)

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Useful Information
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- Are you in a safe place?
- What exactly is burning?
- Where is the fire located? (Exact address or nearest intersection?)
- How large is the fire approximately?
- Is the fire contained or spreading?
- Is anyone injured?
- Is the fire near any structures, vehicles, or other combustibles?
- Is the fire near any power lines?

Dumpster / Rubbish Fire:

- Where is the dumpster located relative to any structures?
- What is in the dumpster/rubbish pile?

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Useful Information
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1. Stay well back from the fire.
2. Do not attempt to extinguish the fire yourself.
3. Keep bystanders away.
4. Do not inhale smoke — move upwind.
5. If near a structure — leave the area immediately.
6. If near power lines — do not approach, stay back at least 10 metres / 30 feet.
7. Meet responding units and direct them to the fire location.

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Useful Information
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Common Types:

- Dumpster/rubbish fire
- Debris/leaf pile fire
- Small outdoor fire (controlled burn gone wrong)
- Abandoned vehicle fire (small — engine compartment only)
- Small grass/weed fire (less than 1 acre)
- Mulch fire
- Illegal burning

Notes:

- Small fires can quickly become large fires — reassess frequently
- Document location of nearest hydrant
- Note wind direction and proximity to structures
- Dumpster fires near buildings require structure check

Main Menu

Fire Incidents

Exit Protocol

Non-Structural Fire (Large)

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
- Are you in a safe place? - What exactly is burning? - What is the approximate size of the fire? - Where is the fire located? Exact address or landmarks? - Is the fire spreading? How quickly? In what direction? - Are any structures threatened? - Is anyone injured or trapped? - Are there any power lines, propane tanks, or fuel in the area? - What are the wind conditions?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
	- Stay well back — a safe distance from the fire. - Do NOT attempt to fight a large fire. - Move upwind of the smoke. - Evacuate the immediate area. - Keep all roads and access routes clear for emergency vehicles. - If structures are threatened — evacuate occupants and meet units at entrance. - Call us back if fire spread accelerates or someone is injured.	

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Common Types: - Large outdoor rubbish/debris fire - Junkyard fire - Large storage lot fire (lumber, vehicles, equipment) - Multi-dumpster fire - Large grass/weed fire threatening structures - Tractor/farm equipment fire (in field) Scripted Preliminary Dispatch: <i>"Units are being dispatched to a large non-structural fire at [location]. Fire is approximately [size]. [Structures threatened / no structures threatened]."</i> Useful Information: - Reassess resource needs as fire grows - Consider aerial water delivery - Relay wind direction and speed to responding units - Establish water supply early — hydrant or tender		

Vehicle Fire

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? (Address, highway mile marker, cross street?) - What type of vehicle? (Car, truck, bus, motorcycle, RV?) - Where on the vehicle is the fire? (Engine, interior, wheels, cargo?) - Is anyone still in the vehicle? - Anyone injured? How many? - Is the vehicle moving or stopped? - Are there any power lines overhead?		
For Truck Fires: - What is the truck carrying? (Cargo type?) - Is the cargo on fire or just the cab/tractor? - HAZMAT placard visible?		
For Train Fires: - Which train line? Direction of travel? - What cars are involved? Number of cars? - Any passengers on board?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Get everyone out of the vehicle immediately. - Move at least 100 feet / 30 metres away — upwind. - Do NOT go back to the vehicle. - If on a highway — move behind a barrier if possible. - Do not use a cell phone near a burning fuel tank. - Warn other drivers/pedestrians to stay back. - If fire is near power lines — stay back at least 10 metres / 30 feet. - Call us back immediately if anyone is trapped.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is the vehicle gas, diesel, electric (EV), or hybrid? - Are there propane or natural gas tanks on the vehicle? Electric/Hybrid vehicles — advise crews of EV fire risk (battery re-ignition) - Is there a HAZMAT placard? What does it show? - Is traffic affected? Is road blocked? - Is there a fuel spill?		
Vehicle Types: - Passenger car, SUV, pickup - Semi/tractor-trailer - Bus (school, transit, charter) - Motorcycle - RV / motorhome - Construction equipment - Train / rail car		
Scripted Preliminary Dispatch: <i>"Units dispatched to a vehicle fire at [location]. [Type of vehicle]. [Occupants/injuries info]."</i>		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Vehicle fuel tanks can BLEVE — keep 100+ feet clearance - EV/Hybrid battery fires require massive water application and may re-ignite hours later - Semi-truck tires can explode — approach from front or rear, not sides - HAZMAT placards on trucks — look up ERG (Emergency Response Guidebook) number - Train fires require railroad company notification and may need evacuation - Notify highway patrol/police for traffic control on roadways - Note direction of travel for mobile/moving vehicle fires		

[Main Menu](#)

[Fire Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Aircraft Fire / Emergency

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
If calling from the ground: - Exact location of the aircraft? (Airport name, runway, area?) - Type of aircraft? (Commercial, private, military, helicopter?) - What exactly is on fire or what is the emergency? - How many people are on board (if known)? - Is the aircraft moving or stationary? - Any injuries or fatalities visible? - Has the aircraft crashed or is it still airborne? If calling from on board: - What is the flight number or aircraft registration? - What is your current location? (Over which area/city?) - What is the nature of the emergency? - How many people are on board? - Are you in contact with the tower or ATC?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
Ground Caller: - Stay back from the aircraft — at least 300 feet. - Do NOT approach the aircraft — fuel spills and explosion risk. - Move upwind of any smoke or fuel. - Keep all bystanders and vehicles away. - If anyone has exited the aircraft — direct them away from the scene. - Guide emergency vehicles to the exact location. On-Board Caller: - Stay calm and follow all crew instructions. - Assume brace position if directed. - Keep seatbelt fastened. - Follow crew evacuation instructions if given. - Leave all carry-on items behind.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Is the aircraft at an airport, helipad, or open field/crash site? - Is there a fuel spill? How large? - What type of fuel? (Jet-A, AVGAS, other?) - Is there a HAZMAT risk from cargo? - Is the airport ARFF (Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting) already responding? Notifications Required: - Airport Operations / ARFF if at airport - FAA / ATC notification - State emergency management if large aircraft - NTSB for accidents involving fatalities Scripted Preliminary Dispatch: <i>"Units dispatched to an aircraft emergency at [location]. [Aircraft type]. [Number of persons on board if known]."</i>		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Aircraft fires — ARFF units are primary at airports; structure companies provide backup - Jet fuel (Jet-A) burns at extremely high temps; AFFF foam required - Magnesium components in aircraft burn violently with water — dry sand or powder - Approach aircraft from the front or rear, never from the sides (engine hazard) - Ejection seats on military aircraft — extreme hazard; 300 ft exclusion zone - Carbon fiber aircraft (787, A350) produce toxic particles when burned - Notify ATC immediately so they can alert other aircraft		

[Main Menu](#)

[Rescue Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Building Collapse

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? - What is the exact address? - What type of building? (Residential, commercial, construction site?) - How many floors were involved in the collapse? - What caused the collapse? (Explosion, fire, structural failure, natural disaster?) - How many people are believed to be trapped? - Any confirmed injuries or fatalities? - Is the collapse complete or partial? - Are there any gas leaks, fires, or power lines down?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
NOT Trapped: - Stay back — secondary collapse is a major hazard. - Do NOT enter or approach the collapsed structure. - Keep all bystanders away. - If you hear someone trapped — mark the location and advise units. - Do not disturb rubble — you may cause further collapse. - If gas odor — move away and advise units. TRAPPED: - Stay calm and try not to move. - Make noise to alert rescuers — tap on pipes or walls. - Cover your mouth with clothing to filter dust. - Signal with a light or whistle if available. - If possible, move to the largest open space near you. - Do not light a lighter or match — possible gas leak.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are there known utilities running through the structure? (Gas, electric?) - What was the occupancy? How many people were inside? - Is the structure part of a larger complex? - Are there other structures at risk of collapse nearby? - Was there a preceding event? (Explosion, fire, earthquake, flood?) Types: - Pancake collapse — most common, occupants may survive in voids - Lean-to collapse — one side intact, void on the fallen side - V-shape collapse — center falls, voids on both sides - Cantilever collapse — portion hanging unsupported Supplemental Resources: - USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) team activation - Structural engineer notification		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Secondary collapse is the greatest hazard to rescuers - Establish a collapse zone — 1.5x the height of the structure - Survivors are most often found in triangular void spaces - Listen for tapping, shouting, or movement sounds - Canine search teams and listening devices enhance victim location - Utility shutoff is critical — gas and electric must be confirmed off - Document number of known occupants for accountability - USAR teams have specialized equipment for shoring and extraction		

[Main Menu](#)

[Rescue Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Confined Space Rescue

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? - What is the exact location of the confined space? - What type of confined space? (Tank, silo, vault, pipe, tunnel, manhole?) - How many people are inside? - What is their condition? Are they conscious and breathing? - What caused the emergency? (Fall, entrapment, toxic atmosphere?) - Is the person(s) able to respond verbally? - Has anyone else entered to help? (Attempt rescue without proper equipment is extremely dangerous)		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
NOT Trapped (Caller Outside): - Do NOT enter the confined space — toxic atmosphere is likely. - Call out to the victim to keep them calm. - Get fresh air moving into the space if safely possible. - Keep all bystanders away. - Locate the entry permit and MSDS for the space. - Meet responding units and show them exact location. TRAPPED (Caller Inside): - Try to stay calm and conserve air. - Signal your location by noise or light. - Do NOT overexert — it increases oxygen consumption. - If possible, move toward the entry point.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- What is the atmosphere of the space? (Known gases, chemicals?) - Is there a confined space entry permit on site? - What is the entry configuration? (Vertical, horizontal, size of opening?) - Is the victim self-rescue capable? - Has anyone else entered and become incapacitated? - Is the employer or site supervisor on scene? Useful Information: - Confined space rescue requires specialized equipment and training - Oxygen deficiency is the leading cause of confined space deaths - Entry without proper atmospheric testing is prohibited - Retrieval line must be pre-rigged before authorized entry Supplemental Resources: - Hazmat team may be needed for atmospheric monitoring - OSHA notification for industrial site incidents		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Useful Information		
- Over 60% of confined space fatalities are would-be rescuers - Oxygen deficient atmosphere (<19.5% O2) is immediately life-threatening - Toxic gases: H2S, CO, methane, chlorine — may have no warning smell - Entry is ONLY authorized for properly equipped and trained personnel - Permit-required confined space must have atmospheric testing first - Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is mandatory for entry - Retrieval/tripod system allows non-entry rescue when possible - Victim may appear simply unconscious — could be toxic atmosphere		

[Main Menu](#)

[Rescue Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Elevator Rescue

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- Are you calling from inside the elevator? - What is the exact address and name of the building? - What floor is the elevator stopped between or on? - How many people are inside the elevator? - Any injuries? Type and severity? - Is anyone having a medical emergency? - Is there smoke, fire, or unusual odors? - Is the elevator moving, shaking, or making unusual sounds? - Is the elevator phone working?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
Person Inside the Elevator: - Stay calm — you are safe inside the elevator car. - Do NOT attempt to force open the doors or climb out. - Press and hold the alarm button to alert building staff. - Use the elevator phone if available. - If the elevator has ventilation slits, stay near them for air. - Do NOT attempt to climb out through the ceiling hatch. - Help is on the way. If Outside / 3rd Party Caller: - Do not attempt to force open elevator doors. - Notify building management or maintenance. - Meet responding units at the main entrance. - Provide access to elevator machine room if possible.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- What elevator company maintains the elevator? - Is building management or maintenance on site? - Is there access to the elevator machine room? - Is the building a high-rise? - Is the elevator between floors or at a floor but doors won't open? - Has the elevator malfunctioned before? Useful Information: - Elevator rescues are generally non-emergency unless medical crisis or fire - Fire personnel can manually lower/raise elevator using machine room controls - NEVER allow occupants to climb out between floors - During a building fire — all elevators must be recalled to ground floor - Elevator company technician should be requested		

Main Menu

Rescue Incidents

Exit Protocol

High Angle Rescue (Rope)

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? - What is the exact location? - What is the situation? (Person fallen, stranded on cliff, worker on elevated structure?) - How many people need rescue? - What is the condition of the victim(s)? Conscious? Injured? - What is the approximate height or angle of the rescue? - Is the person in immediate danger of falling further? - What is the terrain? (Cliff, building rooftop, construction site, canyon?) - What weather conditions are present?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
- Do NOT attempt to rescue the person yourself without proper equipment. - Keep the victim calm — reassure them help is coming. - Keep all bystanders back from the edge. - Do NOT throw ropes or improvised equipment — may cause victim to fall. - Note exact location and any landmarks for responding units. - If the person is on a ledge — tell them to stay still and not move. - Call us back if the victim's condition changes.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
Low-Angle Rope Rescue: Angles up to 35 degrees. Most of rescuer's weight is on the ground; rope used for balance or assistance. Examples: vehicle off road, person fallen over slight ridge. High-Angle Rope Rescue: Angles greater than 45 degrees. Rescuer's weight is entirely supported by the rope system. Examples: cliff face, multi-story building exterior, canyon wall. Supplemental Resources: - Technical rescue team with rope rescue certification - Helicopter for aerial access if terrain prohibits ground approach - Medical unit for victim evaluation and treatment at bottom Scripted Dispatch: <i>"Technical rescue units dispatched to a [high/low] angle rope rescue at [location]."</i>		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
- High angle rescue requires specialized training and equipment - Litter (Stokes basket) and haul/lowering system required - Weather conditions (wind, rain, ice) dramatically affect safety - At night — lighting must be arranged for safe operations - Industrial settings: confirm fall arrest/anchor points are intact - Construction sites: notify site supervisor and OSHA - Consider helicopter if terrain is inaccessible - Bystanders at the edge create additional victim risk		

[Main Menu](#)

[Rescue Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Industrial Entrapment

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location of the incident? (Company name, address, area of plant?) - What type of machinery or equipment is involved? - How is the person trapped? (Caught in machine, pinned, entangled?) - What body part is involved? (Hand, arm, leg, torso?) - Is the machinery still running? - Is the person conscious and breathing? - Is there active bleeding or crush injury visible? - How many people are involved?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- If safe to do so — STOP the machine immediately using emergency shutoff. - Do NOT attempt to pull the person free — this may worsen injury. - Do NOT reverse or move the machine unless directed by rescue personnel. - Keep the victim as still and calm as possible. - Control any bleeding with direct pressure if accessible. - Clear the area of non-essential personnel. - Lockout/Tagout the equipment if trained to do so. - Meet responding units at the entrance with a plant guide.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- What type of machine? (Press, conveyor, auger, roller, drill?) - What is the machine powered by? (Electric, hydraulic, pneumatic?) - Is there a plant safety officer on site? - What is the machine manufacturer? - Is there hydraulic fluid or other fluid involved? - Is there a HAZMAT risk in the area? - Has the lockout/tagout procedure been activated? Useful Information: - Degloving and crush injuries are common - Crush syndrome can cause systemic complications after release - Notify hospital trauma center early - May require hydraulic spreader/cutter for machine disassembly - Employer OSHA incident reporting requirements apply		

Manhole Emergency

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? - What is the exact location of the manhole? - How many people are inside? - What is the condition of the victim(s)? Conscious? Breathing? - What caused the emergency? (Fall, toxic atmosphere, collapse?) - Is there any smoke, fire, or unusual odor coming from the manhole? - Has anyone else entered to help?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Do NOT enter the manhole — toxic atmosphere is possible. - Do NOT lean over the opening — fumes may overcome you immediately. - Get fresh air into the space if safely possible from a distance. - Call out to the victim — do NOT enter to check. - Keep all bystanders and vehicles away. - Meet responding units and provide exact location. - Notify the utility company responsible for the manhole.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - Who owns the manhole? (City utility, telecom, electric, sewer?) - What work was being performed? (Maintenance, construction?) - Is there an entry permit or confined space permit? - Was atmospheric testing done prior to entry? - Is this a sewer, electrical, or telecom vault? Useful Information: - Manhole emergencies are treated as confined space rescues - Sewer manholes contain methane and hydrogen sulfide — immediately toxic - Electrical vaults contain arc flash hazards - Do NOT allow unauthorized entry — rescuers die attempting untrained rescue - Atmospheric testing required before entry - Utility company notification is essential for electrical and gas manholes		

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? (Address, highway, mile marker, cross street?) - How many vehicles are involved? - How many people are injured? Approximate number? - Are there any people trapped in the vehicle? - Are any vehicles on fire? - What is the mechanism? (Head-on, rear-end, rollover, pedestrian?) - Are there any HAZMAT placards on involved vehicles? - Are any power lines down or utility infrastructure damaged? - Are lanes/road blocked?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
	- Move away from traffic to a safe location. - Turn on hazard lights on any non-involved vehicle. - Do NOT move the injured — spinal injury risk. - If there is bleeding — apply firm direct pressure with cloth or clothing. - If there is fire — move everyone away at least 100 feet. - Do NOT try to free anyone trapped — wait for rescue. - If on highway — stay behind a barrier if possible, do NOT stand in the roadway. - Keep all bystanders back. - Call us back if fire starts or condition worsens.	

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- Are any victims ejected from the vehicle? - Is anyone unconscious? Not breathing? - What is the speed of travel on this road? - Are pedestrians, cyclists, or motorcyclists involved? - Is traffic control needed? (Police notified?) - Is this a school bus or vehicle with children? - Is there a fuel spill? - Is an EV/Hybrid vehicle involved? (Battery fire risk) Useful Information: - Notify police for traffic control - School bus incidents — EMS surge and parent notification may be required - EV/Hybrid fires require extended water application - Airbag deployment — advise crews of undeployed airbags in multi-impact collisions		

Main Menu

Rescue Incidents

Exit Protocol

Search and Rescue

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Post-Dispatch
- Are you in a safe place? - Who is missing? (Name, age, description?) - When were they last seen? Exact time? - Where were they last seen? Specific location? - What were they wearing? - Do they have any medical conditions? (Dementia, diabetes, heart condition?) - Do they have a cell phone? Is it on? - What is their last known direction of travel? - Are they on foot, in a vehicle, or on a watercraft? - What is the terrain? (Urban, forest, mountain, water?)		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Post-Dispatch
- Do not go searching alone — you could become a second victim. - Stay in one location so responding units can find you. - If you have a cell phone — keep it on and available. - Do not disturb the area where person was last seen. - Gather any other witnesses who may have information. - Prepare a recent photo of the missing person if available. - Call us back immediately if you locate the person or receive additional information.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Post-Dispatch
Types: - Urban search (lost in city environment) - Wilderness search (forest, mountain, remote area) - Water-based SAR (river, lake, ocean) - Missing child / endangered adult - Dementia/Alzheimer's patient — Silver Alert - Lost hikers or outdoor recreationists 1st Party (caller is the missing person): Where were you last and which direction did you travel? Do you have a GPS device or landmarks visible? 3rd Party: Where was the person last seen? Where did they start from? Who reported them missing? Post-Dispatch: - Activate Silver/Amber Alert if criteria met - Coordinate with law enforcement for grid search - Consider K9 units and drone/aerial search Supplemental Resources: - Mountain rescue / SAR volunteer teams - Coast Guard for water-based SAR		

Main Menu

Rescue Incidents

Exit Protocol

Submerged / Sinking Vehicle

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? (Bridge, road, body of water name?) - How many people are in the vehicle? - Is the vehicle still sinking or is it submerged? - Can the occupants get out? - Is anyone injured? - Is the water moving (river/current) or still (lake/pond)? - What type of vehicle? (Car, truck, van?) - Are the windows up or down? - Can you swim?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
Vehicle in Still Water / Sinking: - Try to open the door — it may open before water pressure equalizes. - Roll down or break the window as soon as possible. - Wait until pressure equalizes then push door open. - Take a breath and exit the vehicle. - Swim toward the surface following air bubbles up. Vehicle Fully Submerged: - Wait for pressure to equalize — then open door or window. - Take a breath, open the door, and swim to the surface. - Follow air bubbles to the surface. Break the Window: - Use a headrest prong, key, or hard object on the corner of the window — NOT the center. 3rd Party / Caller Cannot Swim: - Do NOT enter the water — you may become a second victim. - Look for anything that floats — throw it to the person. - Yell to the person to keep them conscious. - Mark the exact spot where the vehicle went under.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- A vehicle sinks nose-first in most cases — rear air pocket may last 30-60 seconds - Electric windows may not work once submerged — manual window or break it - Water pressure against door requires equalization before door can open - Swift water rescue requires specialized resources — do not deploy standard units in fast water - Mark the last seen point precisely for divers - Notify dive/water rescue team immediately - Swift water: anchor point upstream, throw bag rescue - Time is critical — survival chance drops rapidly after 60 seconds submerged		

Train and Rail Derailment

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? (Train line, nearest road/crossing, mile marker?) - What type of train? (Passenger, freight, commuter, light rail?) - How many cars are derailed? - Are there any fires or fuel spills? - How many people are believed to be on board? - Any confirmed injuries or fatalities? - Is anyone trapped? - Are there HAZMAT placards on any cars? - Is there an overhead electrical contact (catenary) wire involved?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Stay well back from the derailed cars — at least 100 metres / 300 feet. - Do NOT approach if there is fire, smoke, or chemical odor. - If HAZMAT is suspected — move upwind and uphill. - Do NOT cross railroad tracks. - If you are a passenger — exit the car if safe and move away from the train. - Do not attempt to help the injured — wait for trained responders. - Keep bystanders back. - Call us back if fire starts or conditions change.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - What is the railroad company name? - Is there an engineer or conductor accounted for? - Are any cars still moving or sliding? - Is the overhead power line (catenary) down? - What cargo is being carried on freight cars? (HAZMAT placard number?) Useful Information: - Notify railroad company emergency line immediately — they can stop other trains - Catenary wires carry 25,000V+ — extreme hazard, stay 10 metres minimum - HAZMAT cars require ERG lookup by placard number - Passenger trains — triage and mass casualty protocols may apply - Diesel fuel spills are common — fire risk - Request railroad support personnel and equipment - Coordinate with police for scene perimeter and traffic		

Trench Rescue

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location of the trench? (Address, construction site?) - How many people are trapped? - What is the depth of the trench? (Estimated feet/metres?) - What is the victim's condition? Conscious? Breathing? - Is the trench still collapsing? Is soil still moving? - What type of soil? (Sand, clay, rock?) - Is the victim fully or partially buried? - What body parts are buried? - How long has the person been trapped?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
Trench Collapse / Rescue: - Do NOT enter the trench — secondary collapse risk is extreme. - Keep ALL bystanders and workers away from the trench edge. - Vibration from walking/vehicles near the edge can cause further collapse — keep vehicles away. - Stop all mechanical digging equipment immediately. - Talk to the victim to keep them calm and conscious. - Do NOT attempt to free the victim by pulling. - Monitor the soil for further movement. - Activate emergency plan for the construction site.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
Types of Trench Soil Failure: - Slough/raveling — gradual material sliding from walls - Shear failure — wall breaks along a slip plane - Toppling — wall tilts and overturns - Bulging — wall bows inward at base Scripted Dispatch: <i>"Technical rescue units dispatched to a trench rescue at [location]. One victim [confirmed trapped / buried to (level)]."</i> Supplemental Resources: - Technical rescue / trench rescue team - Shoring equipment (pneumatic shores, timber) - Vacuum excavation equipment if available - OSHA notification for construction site incidents		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Useful Information		
1 cubic yard of soil weighs 1,000-3,000 lbs — compression causes asphyxiation - Even partially buried victims may have restricted chest expansion - Secondary collapse is extremely common — maintain 100 ft exclusion zone - No entry until trench is properly shored - Pneumatic shores or hydraulic shores must be placed before entry - Vacuum extraction (vac-ex) can remove soil without shock or vibration - Crush syndrome — notify hospital of likely rhabdomyolysis risk - OSHA reporting is mandatory for trench fatalities and hospitalizations		

[Main Menu](#)

[Rescue Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Water Rescue

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? (Water body name, nearest bridge/road?) - How many people are in the water? - What is the condition of the victim(s)? Conscious? Afloat? - Can the victim swim? - What type of water? (River, lake, ocean, pool, storm drain?) - Is the water moving (swift) or still? - What caused the incident? (Fall, jump, watercraft accident?) - What is the weather? Visibility? Temperature? Watercraft Involved: - Type of watercraft? - Number of people on board? - Has the craft capsized or is it sinking?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Caller in the Water: - Try to float on your back — conserve energy. - Do not fight the current — move at an angle toward shore. - If in swift water — float feet-first, toes up. - Signal for help — wave your arms. - If wearing clothing — trap air in shirt to help float. Caller Cannot Swim: - Stay out of the water — you will become a second victim. - Throw anything that floats to the person in the water. - Lie flat and extend a rope, belt, towel, or branch to them. - Talk to them to keep them conscious and calm. 3rd Party: - Mark the exact location where the person entered the water. - Note the direction they were moving. - Keep eyes on the person at all times.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Types / Dispatch
Swift Water Rescue: Water flowing faster than 1.85 km/h. Includes rivers, creeks, washes, storm drains. Flash flooding is most common. Requires swift water trained rescue teams. Still Water Rescue: Removal of victim from stationary water. Includes lakes, ponds, canals, pools. Standard boat/diver resources. Ice Water Rescue: Victim has fallen through ice. Do NOT walk on ice. Throw rope or use ladder to distribute weight. Hypothermia is immediate concern. Scripted Dispatch: <i>"Water rescue units dispatched to [location]. [Number] victim(s) in the water. [Swift/still/ice water]."</i> Supplemental Resources: - Coast Guard / Marine unit - Dive/underwater rescue team - Helicopter if water is inaccessible		

Main Menu

Rescue Incidents

Exit Protocol

Environmental / Disaster / Mass Casualty

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Are you in a safe place? - What is the exact location? - What type of disaster or event? (Earthquake, flood, tornado, explosion, mass shooting?) - How many people are believed injured or affected? - Are there any confirmed fatalities? - Is the incident still active or ongoing? - Are there any structural collapses or building damage? - Are utilities (gas, electric, water) compromised? - Is there a HAZMAT component?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
Compromised Structure: - Get out of the building immediately. - Move away from the structure — secondary collapse risk. - Do not re-enter. - Assist others in evacuating if safe to do so. - Meet responding units at a safe distance. Medical (Mass Casualty): - If it is safe, do not move the injured unless they are in immediate danger. - Apply pressure to severe bleeding. - Keep the injured as still, calm, and warm as possible. - Do not give food or water to the injured. - Clear a path for responding units. - Triage: direct walking wounded to a single area away from the scene.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Activate Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) protocol per local plan - Establish Incident Command immediately - Notify hospital trauma centers of incoming casualties - Coordinate with law enforcement, EMS, and public works - Media management — designate PIO - Mutual aid may be required early — request early rather than late - Document all actions taken and times - Coordinate with Emergency Management for shelter, utilities, and public notification - FEMA notification if federal disaster declaration may be needed		

Explosive Incidents

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? - What is the exact location? - Did an explosion already occur, or is there an unexploded device? - If explosion occurred — describe what happened and extent of damage. - How many people are injured? Any fatalities? - Is there fire, smoke, or gas leak following the explosion? - Is anyone trapped in a collapsed structure? - What caused the explosion? (Gas leak, industrial, intentional device?) If appropriate: - Is there a suspicious package or device? - Has a threat been made?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
	- Get everyone away from the area immediately. - Move at least 300 metres / 1,000 feet away from the site. - Do NOT use cell phones, radios, or electronic devices near a suspected device. - Move upwind of any smoke or fumes. - Do not disturb any suspicious objects. - Do not re-enter a damaged structure. - Keep all bystanders and vehicles away. - If in a vehicle — do not park near the scene. - Call us back if secondary explosion occurs.	

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - Was the explosion intentional or accidental? - Was there a warning or threat received beforehand? - Is this an industrial/mining site where explosives are used? - Are there secondary explosive risks (propane, fuel, ammunition)? - Is there structural collapse? - Are first responders already on scene? Useful Information: - Secondary devices are a known tactic — do NOT rush into scene - Establish hot/warm/cold zone perimeter immediately - Notify FBI/law enforcement for suspected intentional explosions - EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) required for suspected devices - HAZMAT team for chemical component explosions - Treat as potential crime scene — preserve evidence		

[Main Menu](#)

[HAZMAT Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- Are you in a safe place? Are you outside? - What is the exact address? - Is a CO alarm sounding? Just the alarm, or do people feel ill? - How many people are in the building? - Is anyone experiencing symptoms? (Headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion, loss of consciousness?) - Is anyone unconscious or not breathing? - What type of building? (Residential, commercial, how many floors?) - What possible CO source? (Furnace, generator, vehicle running in garage, fireplace?) - Is the building occupied?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- Get everyone out of the building immediately. - Leave all doors open as you exit. - Do NOT go back inside. - Get fresh air — move away from the building. - Do not start any engines or use any ignition sources near the building. - Call us back if anyone loses consciousness. - Meet responding units at the entrance. If someone is unconscious: - Do not enter the building to retrieve them — you may become a victim. - Open windows and doors from outside if safe. - Let responding units handle entry — they have SCBA.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire of Caller
- What appliances or equipment are in the building? (Furnace, water heater, generator, fireplace?) - Is a vehicle running in the garage? - Is there recent heating system service or chimney work? - Do symptoms improve when outside? (Key sign of CO exposure) - What floor are the affected persons on? CO Poisoning Symptoms: - Mild: Headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea - Moderate: Severe headache, vomiting, confusion, rapid heart rate - Severe: Confusion, loss of consciousness, chest pain, seizures, death Useful Information: - CO is colorless and odorless — no warning to occupants without detector - CO level >35 ppm = immediate danger; >200 ppm = fatal within hours - Victims may appear intoxicated - Multiple sick people in one location = CO until proven otherwise		

Fumes / Gas Leak / Odor

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? Are you outside? - What is the exact address? - What type of odor? (Natural gas [rotten egg], chemical, unknown?) - Where is the odor coming from? (Inside, outside, specific room?) - How strong is the odor? - Is there any visible smoke, vapor cloud, or discoloration? - Is anyone feeling ill? (Headache, nausea, burning eyes/throat?) - Is there any visible leak or damage to piping, appliances, or containers? - What type of building?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Get everyone out of the building immediately. - Do NOT use any electrical switches, light switches, or appliances. - Do NOT use a cell phone inside the building. - Do NOT smoke or use any flame or ignition source. - Leave all doors open as you exit. - Move upwind and away from the building. - Do NOT re-enter the building. - If outside odor — move upwind away from the source. - Keep all vehicles and ignition sources away from the area. - Call us back if anyone loses consciousness or fire starts.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - What appliances use gas in the building? (Furnace, stove, dryer?) - Is this natural gas or propane? - Has any construction or digging occurred nearby recently? - Is the gas meter accessible and visible? - Is there a hissing sound coming from any location? Useful Information: - Natural gas is lighter than air — rises. Propane is heavier — settles low. - Odorant (mercaptan) is added to natural gas for detection — "rotten egg" smell - Even small leaks in confined spaces are explosion risks - Notify gas utility company immediately - Do not restore gas service without utility tech clearance - Carbon monoxide is odorless — use CO card if CO alarm is sounding		

Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? Move upwind if not. - Exact location? - What is the chemical or material involved? Product name? - Is there a placard number (4-digit UN number) or HAZMAT diamond visible? - Is there a spill, leak, or release? - How large is the affected area? - Is anyone exposed or showing symptoms? - How many people are in the area? - Is there fire or risk of ignition?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Get everyone upwind, uphill, and upstream from the release. - Do NOT attempt to clean up or handle the material. - Do NOT touch any spilled material. - Keep all ignition sources away. - If the material is on your skin or clothing — remove clothing and flush with large amounts of water. - Do not eat, drink, or rub eyes if exposed. - Stay out of low areas where vapors may collect. - Call us back immediately if symptoms develop.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - Is there a Safety Data Sheet (SDS/MSDS) available? - What container type? (Drum, tanker, pipeline, package?) - Is the material a gas, liquid, or solid? - Is the release active or has it stopped? - What is the wind direction? Useful Information: - Consult ERG (Emergency Response Guidebook) using placard number - CHEMTREC: 1-800-424-9300 ($\frac{24}{7}$ chemical emergency hotline) - Establish hot/warm/cold zones based on ERG isolation distances - Do not approach without proper PPE and air monitoring - Document all exposed persons for medical follow-up Supplemental Info: - Notify state environmental agency for significant releases - EPA notification may be required for reportable quantities		

Nuclear Incidents

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? - What type of nuclear incident? (Power plant emergency, radiological device, nuclear transport accident, dirty bomb?) - Is there visible damage, fire, or release? - Are there any warning signs or radiation symbols at the site? - Is anyone showing symptoms of radiation exposure? (Nausea, vomiting, skin burns?) - How many people are in the affected area? - What is the wind direction?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Get everyone away from the area immediately. - Move upwind, uphill, and as far from the source as possible. - If you believe you've been exposed — do NOT spread contamination: - Remove outer clothing immediately - Flush skin with large amounts of water - Do NOT rub skin - If indoors — close all windows, doors, and HVAC systems. - Do NOT approach any damaged or smoking nuclear device or container. - Do not eat, drink, or touch your face. - Await official decontamination instructions.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - Is this a nuclear power facility? - Is there a radiation symbol or placard (UN Class 7) visible? - What type of material is involved? (Medical isotope, industrial source, weapons-grade?) - Is there any explosion or fire component? - Is there a public address/warning system in the area? Useful Information: - Notify state radiological emergency response team immediately - NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) notification if licensed facility: 1-301-816-5100 - Radiation dispersal device (dirty bomb) — treat as crime scene AND hazmat - Do NOT use standard decon — request radiological decon team - Potassium Iodide (KI) may be indicated — per medical direction Supplemental Resources: - FEMA RRCC notification - FBI if terrorism suspected		

Main Menu

HAZMAT Incidents

Exit Protocol

Propane Incidents — Commercial

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? Move upwind if not. - Exact address? Business name? - What is the nature of the incident? (Leak, fire, explosion, tank damage?) - Where is the tank located? (How far from structures?) - What size is the tank? (Gallons or litres?) - Is there a visible flame or fire? - Is there a hissing sound indicating a pressurized leak? - Is anyone injured or exposed to fumes? - How many people are in the area?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Evacuate all personnel from the area immediately. - Move upwind at least 300 metres / 1,000 feet. - Do NOT use any ignition source — no phones inside building, no vehicles. - Shut off fuel supply valve if SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE — do not risk exposure. - Do NOT attempt to cool the tank with water if on fire. - Keep all bystanders back. - Notify propane supplier immediately. - Call us back if fire starts or explosion occurs.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - What is the propane supplier/company name? - Is this an above-ground or underground tank? - Is there more than one tank on site? - What equipment uses the propane? (Forklifts, heaters, ovens?) - Is there a relief valve venting? Useful Information: - Propane is heavier than air — vapors collect in low areas and drains - BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion) risk when tank is engulfed in flame - If tank is on fire — do NOT approach; keep 300m+ clearance - Relief valve venting = imminent BLEVE if heated - Cool adjacent tanks with water to prevent BLEVE if fire is nearby - Propane supplier has emergency line — contact immediately		

Propane Incidents — Residential

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
• Are you in a safe place? Move outside if not. • Exact address? • What is the incident? (Leak, fire, damaged tank?) • Where is the tank? (Outside, attached to grill, inside garage?) • Is there a smell of gas inside the home? • Is the tank on fire or just leaking? • Is anyone injured? • How large is the tank? (Small BBQ cylinder, large 500-gal home tank?) • Is anyone still inside the home?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
1. Get everyone out of the home immediately. 2. Do NOT use any electrical switches, lights, or appliances. 3. Do NOT use a phone inside the home. 4. Leave the door open as you exit. 5. Turn off the tank valve if you can do so safely without approaching the leak. 6. Move upwind and away from the tank — at least 100 metres / 300 feet. 7. Do NOT re-enter the home. 8. Call us back if fire starts or anyone is injured.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: • Was there any work done on the gas system recently? • Was the grill or appliance just connected or disconnected? • Is the odor inside, outside, or both? • Can you see or hear the leak? Useful Information: • Small propane cylinders (grill tanks) — turn off valve and move tank away from structures • Large residential tanks — treat similar to commercial tank • Propane is heavier than air — collect in basements, crawl spaces • Do NOT use water on a propane fire — will not extinguish and may spread • Notify propane supplier for leak on their equipment Supplemental Resources: • Propane Education & Research Council emergency line • Utility service shutoff if piped propane system		

Suspicious Package / Bomb Threat / Incendiary Device

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Bomb Threat (Caller is making the threat): - What does the bomb look like? - Where exactly is the bomb? - When is it going to explode? - What kind of bomb is it? - Why did you place it? - What is your name? <i>(Note caller's exact words, accent, speech pattern, background sounds)</i> Suspicious Package: - Where exactly is the package located? - What does it look like? (Size, shape, wires, unusual markings?) - Has anyone touched it? - Is there any liquid seeping from it, unusual odor, or sounds? - Who received it and when? - Was it mailed, hand-delivered, or found?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Do NOT touch, move, shake, or open the package. - Evacuate the area immediately — 300 metres / 1,000 feet minimum. - Do NOT use cell phones, radios, or electronic devices near the device. - Do not allow anyone back in until EOD clears the scene. - Preserve the area — do not disturb potential evidence. - If any powder or liquid leaks — do not touch, cover with cloth, wash hands, leave the room and close the door. - Note anyone who left the area after the package was found. Additional Instructions (if caller is 3rd party): - Advise them not to touch or move the package - Tell them to keep others away - Confirm they are evacuating the area		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
If You Received the Call: - Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. - Do NOT hang up or put on hold. - Signal a coworker to call 911 from another line. - Note the exact time the call was received. - Record all information on a bomb threat checklist. - Note caller ID, voice characteristics, background sounds. If Call is From a 3rd Party: - Where is the person who received the threat? - Has the building been evacuated? - Are there security personnel on site? Useful Information: - EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) is primary for device evaluation - FBI notification required for bomb threats - Do not assume it's a hoax — treat every threat as real - Treat as crime scene — preserve all evidence		

9-1-1 Unknown / Assist Other Agencies / Mutual Aid

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
9-1-1 Unknown / Open Line: - Is anyone there? Can you hear me? - What is your emergency? - What is your location? - Are you in a safe place? - Can you make a sound if you cannot speak? <i>(Attempt callback if call disconnects)</i> Assist Other Agency: - What agency is requesting assistance? - What is the nature of the incident? - What resources are being requested? - What is the incident location? - Who is the requesting agency contact / incident commander? Mutual Aid: - What jurisdiction is requesting mutual aid? - What specific resources are needed? (Units, personnel, equipment?) - What is the assignment for mutual aid units?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
9-1-1 Unknown / Open Line: - Attempt to speak to caller — ask them to make a sound. - Attempt a callback immediately. - Dispatch units to the confirmed or probable location. - Keep the line open and monitor for audio clues. - Treat as an emergency until confirmed otherwise. Assist Other Agency / Mutual Aid: - Confirm the resource request with supervisory authority per local protocol. - Notify the appropriate unit(s) for response. - Relay all known incident information to responding units. - Confirm contact information for the requesting agency IC. - Document all resource requests and times.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Open 9-1-1 lines must be treated as emergencies until cleared - Pocket dials are common — always attempt callback - If a disturbance or threat is heard — dispatch immediately, do not wait for callback - Mutual aid requests must follow local authorization protocol - Document all inter-agency communications and resource tracking - Request confirmation of resource arrival from assisting agencies - Maintain accurate resource status during mutual aid operations		

Check Call / Welfare / Service Call / Animal Rescue

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
Welfare / Check Call: - Who are you concerned about? (Name, age, description?) - What is the exact address? - When were they last seen or heard from? - Why are you concerned? (Didn't answer, missed appointment, unusual behavior?) - Do they have any medical conditions? - Is there a way to access the property? Service Call: - What service is needed? - Is there an immediate hazard involved? - How long has the situation been present? Animal Rescue: - What type of animal? (Dog, cat, livestock, wildlife?) - Where is the animal? (Trapped in vehicle, down a hole, injured on road?) - Is the animal dangerous? - Is the animal injured? - Is there an owner present?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
Welfare Check: - Do not enter the property — wait for fire/police. - If you can see the person and they appear unresponsive, call back immediately. - Check if neighbors have seen any activity. - Note any vehicles in the driveway or lights on. Animal Rescue: - Do not attempt to handle a dangerous or injured wild animal. - If the animal is in a vehicle — note the license plate and location. - Keep bystanders away from the animal. - Do not feed the animal. - If an injured wild animal — contact animal control. - For livestock on the road — warn oncoming traffic if safe to do so.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Welfare checks may reveal medical emergencies, self-harm, or crime scenes — approach with caution - Police should be notified if welfare check may involve a crime or danger to responders - Animal rescues from vehicles: heat is a critical factor in summer — prioritize response - Wildlife rescues — coordinate with Fish & Wildlife or animal control - Document all service calls for pattern tracking - Note any hazards at location for responding crews (dogs, weapons, access issues)		

Electrical Hazard

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? - Do you see flames or smoke? - Can you locate the source or direction of the hazard? - What does it smell like? (Burning rubber, ozone, chemical?) - Is anyone affected by the smell or exposure? (Need for EMS?) - Do you live or work at this location? - Are there any downed power lines? - Is any person or vehicle in contact with the electrical hazard?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
	- Do not endanger yourself. - Avoid the use of energized equipment that could cause a spark. - Get clear of the area and wait for emergency services. - Do NOT touch any electrical equipment, wires, or components. - If downed power lines are involved — stay back at least 10 metres / 30 feet. - If a vehicle is in contact with a power line — stay inside the vehicle unless there is fire. - If you must exit a vehicle with lines on it — jump clear without touching the vehicle and ground simultaneously. - Shuffle away in small steps — do NOT run.	

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
		- Notify the electrical utility company immediately - Downed power lines are always energized until utility confirms otherwise - Ground gradient (step potential) can electrocute persons walking near downed lines - Arc flash can occur when current jumps through air — stay back - Transformers may contain PCBs — hazardous material consideration - Do NOT attempt to remove a downed line with wood or rubber — not safe - Confirm utility shutoff before allowing any approach to contact point - Document the utility company contact and estimated restoration time

Spill / Fuel Leak (Small)

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Are you in a safe place? Move upwind if not. - Exact location? - What material was spilled? (Gasoline, diesel, oil, chemical?) - How large is the spill approximately? (Gallons/litres, area covered?) - Is the material still leaking or contained? - Is there any fire or ignition risk? - Is anyone injured or exposed? - Is the spill on land or in a waterway? - Is there a drain or storm sewer nearby?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
- Stay upwind of the spill. - Do not attempt to clean up the spill yourself. - Keep all ignition sources away — no smoking, no running engines nearby. - If the spill is near a storm drain — do not allow it to flow in. - If you have absorbent material (sand, cat litter, oil-dry) — use it to stop flow toward drains only if safe. - Keep all bystanders away from the spill area. - Call us back if the spill grows or fire starts.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: - What caused the spill? (Vehicle accident, container failure, overfill?) - Is the source shut off? - Is there a SDS/MSDS sheet for the material? - Is the spill near any waterways, storm drains, or sensitive areas? Useful Information: - Small fuel spills still require reporting if they reach waterways - Notify state environmental agency for reportable quantities - Gasoline: 1 gallon can contaminate 750,000 gallons of groundwater - Dry chemical absorbent — do not sweep; shovel into sealed containers - Document spill size, material, and location for incident reporting Supplemental Resources: - Spill cleanup contractor if beyond fire service capacity - EPA/state environmental agency notification		

Investigative

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Odor Unknown: - Where is the odor? (Inside, outside, specific area?) - What does it smell like? (Chemical, burning, sewer, sweet?) - How long has the odor been present? - Is anyone feeling ill? Minor Outdoor Smoke: - Where is the smoke coming from? - What colour is the smoke? - How much smoke? How far can you see it from? - Is there visible fire? Water Leak: - Where is the water coming from? (Ceiling, wall, exterior?) - Is it a large flow or a drip? - Is there structural damage? - Are utilities affected? Lightning Strike: - What did the lightning strike? (Building, tree, vehicle?) - Is there any fire or damage visible? - Is anyone injured?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Extremely Strong Odors: - Get out of the building and move upwind. - Do not use any ignition sources. - Call back if you feel ill or odor intensifies. Minor Outdoor Smoke: - Stay upwind of the smoke. - Do not approach the source. - Keep children and pets inside. - Call back if fire is visible or smoke increases. Water Leak: - Shut off the main water supply if possible and safe. - Move any valuables or electronics away from the water. - Do not touch electrical outlets or switches near standing water. - Vacate if structural damage is present.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Odor Unknown: - Is there any construction or industrial activity nearby? - Are neighbors reporting the same odor? - Has this happened before at this location? Minor Outdoor Smoke: - Is it coming from a chimney, burn pile, or structure? - What direction is the wind blowing? Water Leak: - Is the water clean or contaminated (sewage)? - Is the building owner or manager on scene? - Is there risk of electrical hazard from flooding? Lightning Strike: - Is there any burning smell inside the building? - Has the power gone out? - Are any occupants reporting numbness or injury? Useful Information: - Unknown odors may be gas leaks — treat as gas leak until confirmed otherwise - Sewage water — biohazard, use PPE		

[Main Menu](#)

[Other Incidents](#)

[Exit Protocol](#)

Lockout / Forced Entry

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Locked in/out of Vehicle: - Is there a child, elderly person, or pet locked in the vehicle? - What is the temperature outside? (Heat/cold emergency?) - Where is the vehicle located? - How long has the person/animal been inside? - Is the vehicle running? - Is the person/animal conscious and responsive? Locked in/out of Building: - Are you locked out or locked in? - Is there a medical emergency inside? - What type of building? (Residence, business, other?) - Do you have the right to access the property? - Is there a management office or super on site? - Is there an emergency requiring immediate entry?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Vehicle Lockout — Child/Pet Inside: - Stay with the vehicle. - If the child/pet shows signs of distress — break the window. - If child is unconscious — break window immediately and provide first aid. - Use the corner of a heavy object if you must break the glass. Building Lockout: - Check if any other doors or windows are unlocked. - Contact building management or superintendent. - Do not attempt to break in if you could damage property unnecessarily. - Stay nearby so responding units can reach you.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Vehicle: - What type of vehicle? Make/model/colour? - What year? (Newer vehicles may have remote unlock via manufacturer app) - Is there a roadside assistance plan? (AAA, OnStar, dealership?) Building: - Is there a management company or property owner contact? - Is there a Knox Box on site? - Is law enforcement needed if occupant welfare is in question? Useful Information: - Heat stroke in vehicles: temperature inside can exceed 54°C / 130°F in 20 minutes - Any child or pet in a hot vehicle — immediate response priority - Cold weather lockouts with vulnerable persons inside — also immediate priority - Fire personnel can open most vehicles without damage using tools - Document authority to enter for building forced entries		

Medical Call / Lift Assist

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
Medical Call: - Is the person conscious and breathing? - What is the chief complaint? What is happening? - What is the patient's approximate age? - Is there any bleeding? Severe pain? Loss of consciousness? - Any known medical conditions? (Heart disease, diabetes, seizures?) - Any known allergies? - Is the patient on any medications? - What is the exact address? What floor? Any access issues? Lift Assist: - Is the person injured or just unable to get up? - Where did they fall? (Floor, bed, bath?) - Did they hit their head or lose consciousness? - Are they in pain? Where? - How long have they been on the ground? - What is their age and size?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
Medical: - Stay with the patient. - Do not move them unless in immediate danger. - Keep the patient warm and calm. - If unconscious and not breathing — begin CPR if trained. - If bleeding severely — apply firm direct pressure. - Do not give food, water, or medication unless directed by medical control. - Unlock the front door and clear a path for responders. Lift Assist: - Do not attempt to lift the person yourself — injury risk. - Keep the person calm and still. - Cover them with a blanket for warmth and comfort. - Check for injuries before responders arrive. - Clear the area around the person for responder access.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Confirm if EMS is already responding or if fire is being requested in addition - Lift assists may reveal underlying medical emergency — assess on arrival - Fall from standing height can cause serious spinal injury in elderly patients - Prolonged time on the floor ("long lay") can cause rhabdomyolysis and pressure injuries - Mental health calls may accompany medical calls — coordinate with behavioral health if needed - Bariatric patients may require additional units and specialized equipment - Document any medications visible at the scene for EMS handoff		

Power Lines / Wires Down

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
• Are you in a safe place? • Exact location of the downed lines? • How many lines are down? • Are the lines sparking, arcing, or on fire? • Is there a grass/structure fire as a result? • Is anyone in contact with the lines? (Person, vehicle?) • What caused the lines to come down? (Storm, MVA, tree, equipment failure?) • Are there any vehicles on the lines? • Are traffic lanes blocked?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
1. Stay back at least 10 metres / 30 feet from any downed line. 2. Assume ALL downed lines are energized — even if not sparking. 3. Do NOT touch anyone or anything that is in contact with the line. 4. If a vehicle is on a downed line — tell the occupants to stay inside. 5. Warn other pedestrians and drivers to stay back. 6. Do NOT drive over downed lines. 7. Do NOT try to move the line with any object. 8. If you must exit a vehicle on a line — jump clear without touching ground and vehicle simultaneously, then shuffle away in small steps.		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Inquire / Useful Info
Inquire of Caller: • What utility company is responsible for these lines? (Electric, cable, telephone?) • Are there any structures on fire? • Is there a transformer involved? (Arcing, burning, exploding?) • Has power to the area been affected? (Outage?) Useful Information: • Notify utility company immediately — they must de-energize before crews can work • Ground gradient (step potential) danger — current spreads from contact point in radial pattern • Sparking or arcing indicates energized line — no approach without utility confirmation of shutoff • Transformers may contain PCBs — HAZMAT consideration • Traffic control / police notification for blocked roads Supplemental Resources: • Utility company emergency line • Police for traffic control		

Suspicious Incident

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
- Are you in a safe place? - Exact location? - What is suspicious? (Person, vehicle, object, activity?) - Can you describe the person? (Age, sex, height, clothing, direction of travel?) - Can you describe the vehicle? (Make, model, colour, licence plate?) - What makes you think it is suspicious? - Is there any fire, smoke, or hazardous material involved? - Is anyone in immediate danger? - Are there weapons visible?		

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
	- Do NOT approach the suspicious person, vehicle, or object. - Stay in a safe location and keep watching if possible. - Do not confront or challenge anyone. - Do not touch or disturb any suspicious object. - Keep others away from the area. - Note and remember all details — description, direction, time. - Call us back if the situation changes or person moves.	

Vital Points Questions	Pre-Arrival Instructions	Useful Information
		- Coordinate with law enforcement — police should be primary unless fire/HAZMAT component - If fire service is responding to a suspicious incident — advise crew of potential law enforcement involvement - Suspicious packages — see Suspicious Package guide card - Suspicious odors — see Fumes/Gas Leak guide card or Investigative guide card - Do not broadcast details on insecure radio channels if crime is in progress - Document all witness statements and times for police - Treat caller information as confidential — do not relay caller identity over radio

- [Main Menu](#)
- [Other Incidents](#)
- [Exit Protocol](#)