



SAFETY TALKS: Reporting Accidents and Emergencies

A great benefit of cellular mobile telephones is their use in reporting trouble, according to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and other police, fire and emergency response agencies. To warrant mobile phone handling, authorities say that an incident is considered an emergency if it requires immediate action.

Mobile phone numbers for reporting emergencies vary by state, region and city. Motorists should obtain numbers for their localities and keep them at hand for quick calling in event of an emergency.

A motorist who has a cellular phone and happens upon an emergency should be prepared to give specific information to the agency called. Most dispatchers will ask for facts but it is best if motorists have ready the following details:

Location of the emergency: road name or number, city, closest cross street or off-ramp, milepost or other identifier, direction of travel, and any distinguishing landmarks

Nature of the emergency: crash, reckless or suspected drinking driver, traffic hazard, medical emergency, fire, crime in progress, etc.

In every instance, the dispatcher will ask for the caller's name, mobile phone number, and home and work phone numbers in case more information is needed. Important: A caller should stay on the line until the dispatcher says he or she has enough information to be able to send help.

It is almost impossible to provide accurate information and drive safely at the same time. Pull over, turn on your hazard lights (flashers) and stop.

Above all, after reporting an emergency, mobile phone users should never risk their own safety. Calling for trained, professional help is the best approach, although in an immediate life-threatening situation it may be appropriate to take rescue action provided the "rescuer" is not endangered.