

9-1-1 Fact Sheet



**Roanoke
Virginia Healthy Hearts
Initiative**

About Us

The **Roanoke Healthy Hearts Initiative Learning Collaborative (LC)** is a community-led group that works to improve heart health in Northwest Roanoke. We are guided by residents with lived experience, informing our mission and efforts with their firsthand insights and care, and their love and understanding of the Northwest community.

Roanoke Fire-EMS fosters a diverse, inclusive, and innovative workforce, proudly serving the residents, citizens, and visitors of Roanoke by protecting lives and property with professionalism, integrity, and respect.



Frequently Asked Questions About Calling 9-1-1

Does it cost anything to call 9-1-1?

- No - there's no charge just to call 9-1-1 or to have EMS come check on someone.
- If you need care or transport to the hospital, that's when billing can start.
- The cost depends on the kind of treatment you get during the transport.

What if I'm not sure it's serious enough to call 9-1-1?

If you're unsure, always call.

- For a heart attack: Time is heart muscle.
- For a stroke: Time is brain.

You have a short window (often called the "Golden Hour") to get life-saving treatment. When in doubt, EMS would rather check you than have you wait too long.

What happens if I can't pay my bill?

- Don't panic, EMS uses "soft billing," which means your bill won't go to collections (and it won't affect your credit report) if you can't pay.
- You can make small payments, ask the EMS Office for help, or fill out a hardship form.
- Just call the number on your bill and ask about your options.

Is the bill always from EMS?

- Not always. You might get a separate bill from the hospital, especially if you got treatment there.
- Hospitals also have hardship forms and must give care no matter what. They can't turn you away.
- Always call and ask for help if you're unsure what you owe. They may be able to set up a payment plan for you.

What if I have Medicaid, Medicare, or no insurance?

- EMS will bill your insurance (including Medicaid or Medicare), but those programs decide how much they'll pay.
- If you don't have insurance or can't pay, you can ask for bill help or a payment plan.
- You can also request a hardship form from Roanoke Fire-EMS or Roanoke City, which helps reduce or remove the bill.

What should I have ready when I call 9-1-1?

It helps to have:

- Your name and date of birth
- Any medical history or current medications
- List of any allergies
- Which hospital you prefer, if you have one

You don't need your insurance card when you call; they'll collect that at the hospital. If you get a bill later and have insurance, call EMS and they can rebill it.

EMS will ALWAYS help you, even if you don't have insurance, which is why it may help to provide it later if you are insured.

Does calling 9-1-1 really help in a heart or stroke emergency?

Yes! If you are having a heart attack or stroke, EMS calls an alert while you're on the way to the hospital. That means doctors are ready for you when you arrive, like skipping the line.

Calling 9-1-1 is the fastest way to get help if you're having a heart attack or stroke. You may go straight to the heart or stroke team, which saves time and brain or heart function.

CONTACT US



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