

A GUIDE TO CALLING 911 FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL INTERVENTION

When calling 911 in response to an overdose, take these steps to promote the dispatch of medical first responders:

It is important to seek emergency medical care in the case of an overdose. Even when seeking medical intervention, calling 911 can sometimes lead to the deployment of law enforcement. Bystanders can take these steps to reduce the likelihood of police response and elicit prompt medical response to potentially save a life.



Start by saying “I am calling to report a medical emergency”

Objectively describe the signs and symptoms which you are seeing without making assumptions.

- “The person is not breathing and is unresponsive.”
- Do NOT use language like “drug overdose” to avoid police response.

Assign someone to stay with the affected person until help arrives and allow others to leave.

- Announce to people present that 911 was called, and that police may arrive, to allow them the chance to exit.
- Limit noise. A loud commotion may prompt police dispatch.

Know Your Rights.

- If you call 911 to get medical assistance at the scene of an overdose, you cannot be criminally charged with simple possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, or being under the influence (CHSC 1799.102)

Learn more at:
uhs.berkeley.edu/aodemergencyinterventions

