



Pocket Dials

I've called 911 by accident while my cell phone was in my pocket. What do I do now?

Do you know that approximately 40% of cellular 911 calls are pocket dials?

(<http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/05/10/almost-40-of-new-yorks-911-calls-are-butt-dials/>)

A pocket dial, or butt dial as it is sometimes called, is when 911 is dialed unbeknownst to the phone owner. 911 is dialed, the call is answered by a dispatcher and based on what is heard, additional action is taken.

Pocket dials not only waste the caller's minutes but also the answering dispatcher's time. The dispatcher is required to listen in on the call to try to decipher background noises to see if there actually is some type of emergency. And believe me, many times we do not want to hear some of these conversations! Well, after listening for awhile and coming to the conclusion that there is no more reason to listen in, the dispatcher has to call the number back to verify there is no emergency. Once called back, the dispatcher then determines if, and what type of, assistance needs to be sent.

This is very time consuming and could delay a dispatcher tending to a real emergency.

Occasionally, there is some type of disturbance heard and the dispatcher makes every attempt to try to locate the cell phone owner to try to get the caller help. However, it is very important if you do have an actual emergency, to notify the dispatcher of your location if possible. Even with all this technology, the caller's location cannot be pinpointed exactly. The FCC's E911 rules (47 C.F.R. §20.18 -) require providers to provide location information based on the following standards:

- for network-based technologies:
 - 100 meters for 67 percent of calls
 - 300 meters for 90 percent of calls;
- for handset-based technologies:
 - 50 meters for 67 percent of calls
 - 150 meters for 90 percent of calls

(<http://www.911.gov/docs/State-of-911-Webinar-112113.pdf>). So even though we are able to get a generalized area where assistance is needed, we are not able to get an exact address. That is why it is important to actually stay on the line and speak to the dispatcher, whenever possible.

To get back on topic, pocket dials are a waste to everybody involved - a waste on the phone owner's minutes and on the dispatcher's time. Remember to make sure that your screen is locked or your phone is turned off before putting it in your pocket or purse. We value our time as much as you value yours.