



Media Release

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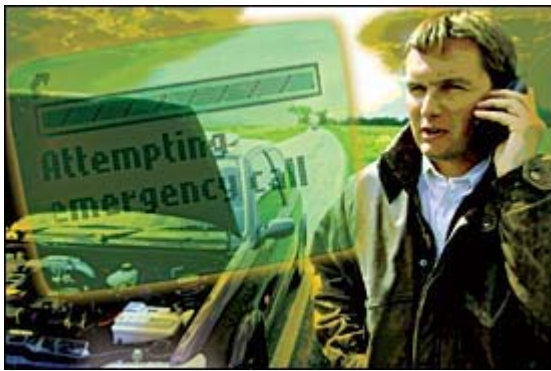
For Immediate Release

York Region launches 9-1-1 awareness campaign for cellphone users

Providing your exact location is crucial for emergency responders

NEWMARKET – We can't help you if we can't find you.

That's a friendly reminder from the Emergency Communicators of York Region who receive 9-1-1 calls for police, fire and medical emergencies.



The message is directed at cellular telephone users. Approximately 50 per cent of all calls to 9-1-1 for emergency assistance in York Region are made from cell phones, and many people do not realize that precise location information is not automatically available to the Emergency Communicator on the other end of the line.

When calling 9-1-1 from a regular home or business telephone, also known as a landline telephone, location information is relayed to the Emergency Communicator. That is not the case when a call comes through from most cell phones. When using a cell phone in an emergency, it's important to provide as much information as possible about where you are – so you can get the emergency assistance you need as quickly as possible.

“Every second counts in a 9-1-1 emergency,” said Bill Fisch, York Regional Chair and CEO. “York Region recognizes that cellphone users need to be better informed about the limits of cellular technology in an emergency situation. We hope that other municipalities across Canada will adopt similar campaigns to educate the public.”

“Technology and mobile communications have increased our ability to respond to emergencies and save lives,” added Armand La Barge, York Regional Police Chief. “However, it is essential that we educate cellphone users to communicate to 9-1-1 dispatchers their exact location so that emergency personnel can arrive at the scene promptly.”

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To reinforce this important information, the Regional Municipality of York is distributing cell phone stickers made of a special material that prevents a cell phone from slipping or sliding. Affix one of these stickers to the back of your cell phone or other wireless communication device and it stays put on a flat or angled surface, such as a vehicle dash board. The sticker is imprinted with important reminders on how to call 9-1-1.

York Region is the first municipality in Canada to distribute these stickers which are patented as egrips™. Both the U.S. states of Texas and California incorporate the stickers as part of their 9-1-1 education programs.

York Region is distributing the cellular phone stickers as part of Tri-Services Emergency Communicators Appreciation Week, which takes place April 10 to 16th.

Emergency Communicators from police, fire and ambulance services in York Region are recognized for their dedication and professionalism during this week, which includes an awards ceremony at the York Region Administration Centre at 7 p.m. on Tuesday May 12th, where outstanding communicators from the three services receive awards. There will also be a Junior 9-1-1 presented to a child who has demonstrated appropriate use of the 9-1-1 system in an emergency.

Emergency Communicators will also participate in a display at Vaughan Mills Shopping Centre on Saturday April 16th, which provides the public with an opportunity to meet and speak with members of the three services.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, the services we offer and links to our nine area municipalities, please visit our Web site at www.york.ca

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Media Contact: Joan Prentice, Public Education Coordinator
Emergency Management, York Region
(905) 830-4444 or 1-877-464-9675, Ext. 1230
Email: joan.prentice@york.ca

Ken Turriff, Corporate Communications, York Region
(905) 830-4444 or 1-877-464-9675, ext. 1226
Email: ken.turriff@york.ca