

By Jacqueline Brininger

Director

York County 911

### Protect Your Family, Pets By Signing Up For Smart911

Help protect your family and pets in an emergency by signing up today for Smart911.

Smart 911 is a new program offered by the York County Department of Emergency Services to local residents and families. It allows you to provide critical information to 911 dispatchers before an emergency arises by creating a free, secure online profile at Smart911.com.

The profile is tied to your phone number, and immediately becomes available if you call 911. It contains largely the same information as you would give verbally to a 911 dispatcher, but it is provided calmly before an emergency arises.

The amount of information you provide is entirely at your discretion, but examples include:

- Details regarding the layout of your home, which can aid firefighters if they need to conduct a search in a fire or other emergency,
- Information about allergies and medical conditions that may be crucial to emergency medical staff.
- Information on physical or developmental disabilities, which can change the way responders handle a call.
  - For example, you can advise if there is an autistic child in the home that is prone to hide in a closet if he/she hears a siren. Firefighters and police would know to check closets for the child. Similarly, you can note whether someone in the home needs assistance exiting your home because of mobility challenges.
- Emergency contacts, which ensures responders quickly can contact a user's family or friends in case of an vehicle accident or other emergency
- Information about pets, which can lead to greater safety not only for the pet but also for response agencies. For example, if responders are aware that a large dog is inside a home, they can act appropriately to keep that pet safe.

The information you provide is stored securely and is not searchable through the Internet or even by our 911 dispatchers. It is only available to the 911 Center dispatcher when you contact 911, and only for 45 minutes.

Creating a profile also helps you even if you are traveling. Because Smart911 is tied to a phone number, the information you enter into Smart911 would become available if you need to call 911 in the other 1,500 communities that also provide this service to their residents.

Signing up for Smart911 is free and easy. It takes only about 10 minutes to create a basic profile. Please go to Smart911.com today to learn more information and sign up. It is time well spent.