

From the Office of the Sheriff: "Know your N-1-1's"

The North American Numbering Plan is a special abbreviated dialing telephone number which allows access to special services. Usage is assigned as follows: 211 is for community services; 311 is for non-emergency municipal services; 411 is for directory assistance; 511 is for traffic information; 611 is for telephone company customer service; 711 to access a TDD; 811 is for underground public utility location; and we are all familiar with 911 for emergency services. The numbers 411 and 911 work from nearly every telephone in the U.S. and Canada, while the others vary from place to place. Generally, only 411 calls incur a toll. 911 access is mandated by law, even on lines with no service.

Not well known but an essential number is 211. Every hour of every day, hundreds of people need essential human services - they are looking for training, employment, food pantries, help for an aging parent, addiction prevention programs for their teenage children, affordable housing options, support groups and ways of becoming part of their community. 211 will allow people to give help and to get help. Our 211 is spearheaded by the United Way and calls within Dodge County are received by the Waukesha call center.

For some, 311 may be available as well for urgent (but non-emergency) calls to police, or to local government. I am not aware of any local governments currently using the 311 system. Dialing 411 will access local directory assistance in the United States and Canada. Most 411 calls were free and are commonly referred to as "Directory Assistance" or "Information". The traditional long-distance directory assistance number is 1-area code-555-1212.

Dialing 511 provides you access to instant road information. When you dial this number, you can receive road, weather and construction information for exact routes, regions or cities. Some states use 511 to even access local airport and train information. Likewise, local or state government may or may not operate traffic information through 511. Price is that of a local call. By dialing 611 you will be connected to your telephone company customer service and repair.

Calling 711 will provide access to your local TDD or telecommunications device for the deaf. This is an electronic device for text communication via a telephone line, used when one or more of the parties has hearing or speech difficulties.

You may dial 811 regardless of where you do business as the gas, electric, cable TV, water, and sewer lines that serve you may very likely be underground. If you are doing any digging, state law requires you to notify Diggers Hotline at least three working days in advance. The 811 system was made mandatory in the U.S. in 2007.

Finally we have 911 or the number for emergency calls. We fielded 17k 911 calls in 2010 and it is the lifeline for our population. On the receiving end you will be greeted by a professional who can provide you the assistance and reassurance you need until help arrives. Well, you now know all you need to know about the N-1-1 system, thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.