



## WALLA WALLA COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



To Whom It May Concern:

During the past several months Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies have noticed an increase in 9-1-1 calls to Residential Care and Assisted Living facilities for incidents where it is inappropriate to utilize 9-1-1. In order to assist your staff in determining whether this incident does or does not require emergency (9-1-1) EMS response we've developed the following suggestions:

**SHOULD** call 9-1-1 if:

- Someone is unconscious or unresponsive
- Someone with life threatening or acute sickness or injuries
- Someone has fallen and is not behaving normally for their baseline

**SHOULD NOT** call 9-1-1 if:

- Someone has fallen, is not injured and does not require medical care
- Someone has slipped out of their wheelchair, is not injured and does not require medical care
- If the resident is behaving normally, is not sick or injured, and isn't requesting 9-1-1 be called

If your facility policy states a resident who has fallen must receive a medical clearance, this clearance can only be performed by a physician. EMS agencies do not carry definitive diagnostic equipment and cannot medically clear your residents. If we are called to those situations, we can transport the resident to the emergency room. The resident's medical insurance most likely will not cover the expense of a non-urgent medical transport and that expense could fall to the resident. Under these circumstances, we'd advise calling the resident's Power of Attorney (POA), explaining the situation and asking if the POA would like the resident transported to the hospital.

We always encourage facilities to call 9-1-1 if they believe EMS is needed, but we'd like you to understand that we are here to provide emergency medical care to the sick and injured and should not be called to assist your staff in providing non-emergent care to residents.

If you have any questions, need any additional information, or would like to speak with the Walla Walla County Medical Program Director, Dr. Lewis Neace, please contact the Walla Walla County EMS Director, Heather Lee at the number listed below.