



## **Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities**

### Information Sheet:

How those in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities  
can request Police/Fire/Medical Assistance from Public Pay  
Phones or Emergency Call Boxes

This memo provides information to members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, as well as to others who are unable to voice, about how to request emergency services (Police, Fire, and medical assistance) via public pay telephones and emergency call boxes on the street. The New York City Police and Fire Departments have instituted a tapping method that can be used when calling 911, and when summoning help from emergency call boxes within New York City. Two types of tapping are used: one for Police assistance, and the other for Fire and Emergency Medical Service (“EMS”) response (EMS has merged with the Fire Department, and firefighters have undergone special emergency medical training).

### **To Summon the Police:**

**Whether you are calling 911 or using an emergency call box, to summon the Police, use a continuous steady tapping pattern (TAP TAP TAP TAP, etc.) for at least 90 seconds, and preferably until the Police arrive. Use the same steady tapping pattern to summon the Police, whether you use an emergency call box or call 911 from a public telephone.**

To summon the Police using a public pay phone: Dial 911 (no coin required). After dialing, wait four seconds and then start tapping on the mouthpiece of the telephone. Continue tapping for at least 90 seconds, and preferably until the Police arrive. (In New York City, every telephone automatically transmits its location to 911 operators, and help will be sent to that location.) Remain at the location to direct the Police to the emergency.

To summon the Police using an emergency call box: Lift the blue cover (labeled “Police”) and press the button to summon the Police Department. Wait four seconds and then start tapping on the speaker grill of the call box. Continue tapping for at least 90 seconds, and preferably until the Police arrive. Remain at the location to direct the Police to the emergency.

## **To Summon Fire or Emergency Medical Services:**

**Use a repeated two-tap pattern (TAP-TAP ... pause ... TAP-TAP...pause, etc.) for at least 90 seconds, and preferably until the Fire Department arrives. Use the same two-tap pattern to summon Fire/Medical services, regardless of whether you use an emergency call box or call 911 from a public telephone.**

To summon Fire/Medical services using a public pay phone: Dial 911 (no coin required). After dialing, wait four seconds and then start tapping on the mouthpiece of the telephone, using the repeating two-tap pattern described above for Fire/EMS services. Continue this two-tap pattern for at least 90 seconds, and preferably until the Fire Department arrives. (In New York City, every telephone automatically transmits its location to 911 operators, and help will be sent to that location.)

To summon Fire/Medical services using an emergency call box: Lift the red cover (labeled "Fire") and press the button to summon Fire and Emergency Medical Services. After pressing the button, wait four seconds and then start tapping on the speaker section of the call box, using the repeating two-tap pattern described above. Continue tapping for at least 90 seconds, and preferably until the Police arrive.