

# COUNTY OF KANE

*Public Information Office*



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## **Cell Phone Feature Causing Surge in Calls to 9-1-1 in Kane County**

A software update to cell phones is being blamed for a dramatic uptick in accidental calls to 9-1-1.

According to KaneComm, Kane County's 9-1-1 Dispatch System, Telecommunicators processed an additional 2,000 phone calls in June 2023 than the same time last year. After looking at call statistics for both May and June and doing some research, KaneComm determined the spike in calls was primarily from cellphone users who accidentally dialed 9-1-1.

"Typically, accidental calls show up as abandoned (or hang-up) calls, but these accidental calls come in to the center and don't hang up right away," said KaneComm Director Michelle Guthrie. "They are 9-1-1 calls that come in as an open phone line. Telecommunicators have to remain on the line and determine if the caller has an emergency."

It is believed software and device updates that automatically turn on the Emergency SOS feature on the phone is the reason behind the unintended emergency calls. Unbeknownst to the user, the feature can be triggered when the cell phone sensors detect certain motions that indicate the user has been involved in a car crash or fall. However, the cell phone is also sensing everyday activity, especially activity that may shake the phone, like mowing the lawn.

"These features can be extremely helpful in an emergency but they can also easily cause accidental 9-1-1 calls too," said Guthrie.

The problem: telecommunicators have to follow up on every call to 9-1-1 no matter if it was an accident or hang-up to confirm there is no emergency. That takes away from time and resources needed for real emergencies.

While not encouraging individuals to disable the SOS feature, KaneComm would like people to know about the feature and what it does.


Cellphone users can adjust the preference settings for the "Emergency SOS" feature by following the diagrams below for both Android and iPhones.

Along with changing the settings on your cellphone you can also assist 9-1-1 telecommunicators by not hanging up if you accidentally dial 9-1-1. Just state that you are safe and there's no emergency and the call was accidental.



KaneComm serves the following agencies and communities:

Kane County Sheriff's Office  
Kane County Office of Emergency Management

- Wayne Police Department
- Gilberts Police Department
- Hampshire Police Department
- Maple Park Police Department
- Pingree Grove Police Department
- Campton Hills Police Department
- Kane County Forest Preserve Police Department
- Burlington Fire Protection District
- Hampshire Fire Protection District
- Maple Park Fire Protection District
- Pingree Grove and Countryside Fire Protection District
- Fox River and Countryside Fire Protection District
- Big Rock Fire Protection District
- Kaneville Fire Protection District




### How to stop your device from calling 9-1-1 accidentally: Options for iPhone:

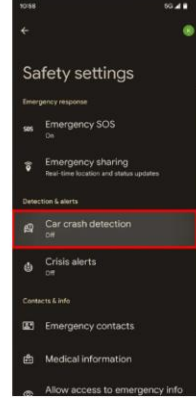




- Open the Settings App
- Find “Emergency SOS” in the settings list
- Choose your preferred settings

**If you accidentally call 9-1-1, don’t hang up! Stay on the line so our Telecommunicators can make sure you’re safe and there’s no emergency.**



### How to stop your device from calling 9-1-1 accidentally: Options for Android:

- Open the settings
- Advanced Features
- Motions and Gestures
- Turn off “double tap to unlock screen”

Open the app drawer and click on the Safety App

- Tap on the “features” tab on the bottom of the screen.
- Click on “Car Crash Detection”
- This feature can trigger a false alarm by giving a certain amount of time to cancel the countdown. If you don’t cancel, it will call 9-1-1

**\*\*It’s a helpful safety feature, but can easily cause accidental 9-1-1 calls**