

911 pocket dials

Dufferin OPP are warning residents to put their phones in 'lock' mode and to use a proper phone holster to avoid making erroneous 911 calls.

It's one thing to keep pocket-dialing your friends and family but quite another if your phone dials 911 by mistake. Dufferin County OPP were dispatched to more than 495 accidental pocket-dialed 911 calls in 2013 resulting in hundreds of hours of police time responding to and investigating these unnecessary calls.

And they predict even more misdialed calls in 2014 as the population grows and more people have cell phones, according to an OPP press release.

"This involves a significant amount of lost time that could be spent being more proactive in the community, with crime prevention, traffic safety and community policing initiatives," Dufferin County OPP Detachment Commander Staff Sergeant Steven Sills stated in the release. "Time spent on 911 misdials is time that could potentially be used to save someone's life and moreover it activates other emergency response protocols potentially and unnecessarily putting first responders in harm's way." Police respond to every 911 call, even the mistakes, the release states.

Police have to ensure that there is no real emergency. These responses usually mean police attend to businesses, residences or spend time trying to locate the source of the call. Police are reminding citizens that it is a criminal offence to knowingly make a false 911 call and that responding to accidental calls wastes police time and could potentially affect public safety. So speak to family and friends about the proper use of the 911 system, don't let children play with your phone, use a smart phone holster rather than let your phone rattle around in your pocket or purse, and put it in lock mode when not in use.

If you realize you have mis-dialed, don't hang up. Stay on the line and speak with the operator to provide more details.

"Erroneous emergency calls place unnecessary strain on police resources and all first responders, we urge everyone in our community to please make a concerted effort to minimize or eliminate accidental 911 calls," said Sills