

# SAFETY CORNER

## Public Safety Newsletter

**TOPIC: 911 Where's Your Emergency?**

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On a snowy January night a call comes into the Mitchell Regional 911 center for a person with difficulty breathing. Within seconds a tone goes out over the radio for an ambulance to respond. The address is given and the ambulance is en route within sixty seconds.

When a person can't breathe, seconds count, seconds seem like an eternity. They need immediate medical intervention and any delay could be fatal.

Are your address numbers on your home? This simple thing could prevent emergency personnel from finding you quickly in your time of need. Address numbers are required on all residences and business buildings for your safety. The days of responding to John Does farm a half mile east of Pumpkin Corner are long gone. Young new responders are not familiar with the old names of roads and they don't necessarily know the names of every business or family in the response area. Did you know Mitchell Ambulance has a response area of over 900 square miles!

City addressing and rural addressing can get emergency personnel within the block or mile but without the house or business numbers being prominently displayed; valuable time may be lost trying to locate your home or business.

Here is what you can do:

1. The design, style, and shape of address numbers must render them easily readable from the street fronting the property, day or night. The numbers must contrast with the background. The numbers must be at least 4 inches high and a minimum stroke of a half an inch.
2. Where conditions (shadows, overgrown vegetation, building location greater than 50 feet from the street or road, etc) adversely affect the legibility of numbers, larger numbers may be required. They should be a minimum of 8 inches in height and a stroke of at least an inch.

Address numbers painted on the curb are nice, but they don't count. Vehicles, snow and debris can obscure the numbers and prevent emergency personnel from seeing them.

In order to help you locate addresses in and around Mitchell let me explain some of the key features of each.

In Mitchell avenues run east and west and streets run north and south. Main Street is the

base line running north and south and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is the base line running east and west. Each block emanating away from these base lines is 100, 200, 300 etc. You will find even numbers on the north and east side of streets and avenues. The south and west sides will be odd numbers. There are some exceptions to this rule around the Dakota Wesleyan University and some subdivisions around Lake Mitchell.

In the County avenues run north and south and the streets run east and west. This is opposite of what is in the City limits of Mitchell. Roads are thoroughfares that meander or run diagonally. Dead end thoroughfares that are longer than 500 feet are "Places". If they are less than 500 feet then they are "Courts". A "Loop" is a thoroughfare that begins and ends on the same thoroughfare. Any thoroughfare not falling on a section line is named by the county. House numbers are 5 digits long. The first three numbers will be the gridline just crossed according to the statewide addressing grid. If the location is on a street, the first three numbers will be the gridline just crossed to the west of the location. If the location is on an avenue, the first three numbers will be the gridline just crossed to the north of the location. The next two numbers will be the "lot" number within that section. There will be 100 addresses pr section or 50 addresses on each side of the avenue or street. Even numbers will be found on the north and east sides and odd numbering on the south and west.

In case you were wondering if that home had the address numbers on it. It did. The emergency personnel were able to quickly find the address. The paramedics found a person suffering from a heart attack. A 12 lead EKG was done in the field and transmitted via wireless to the emergency room where the doctor ordered medications that can dissolve the life threatening clot if it is given in time.

Ah, but that is another article of its own.

Sincerely,  
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If you would like to learn about certain topics please email [cindy@mitchelldps.com](mailto:cindy@mitchelldps.com) and reference Safety Corner.

