

Calling 000 for a medical emergency

Knowing how to call 000 in a medical emergency can be the difference between life and death. Making the 000 call can be frightening but knowing the process and the questions you will be asked can make it a little less confronting.

If you are faced with a medical emergency, there are five simple steps to follow:

- **Call 000**
- **Ask for an ambulance**
- **Answer the questions that are asked**
- **Keep as calm as possible and be clear**
- **Do not hang-up and wait for more instructions**

The information that you will need to have when you make the call is as follows:

- **Where are you? What is the exact address?**
- **What number are you calling from?**
- **What is the problem?**
- **Is the person conscious?**

Be aware that the police do not routinely attend an ambulance call, even if there are illegal drugs involved. The only reason the police will usually attend is if the paramedics ask them to be there. This is usually due to another crime taking place or the threat of violence.

You can call Triple Zero (000) 24 hours a day, seven days a week from any landline, pay phone or mobile phone. Calls to 000 are always free and you can access the line even if you do not have any credit or your phone is locked.

There is also an emergency service for those people who are unable to speak English. They will need to use a landline, once again calling 000 and ask for the service they want. Once connected to that service, they need to stay on the line and a translator will be organised.

Those with hearing or speech impairments can call 106. This is a text-based emergency call service using a text phone.

If you are faced with a medical emergency, there are five simple steps to follow:

- **Call 000**
- **Ask for an ambulance** – when you call 000 it will be answered by a Telstra operator and they will ask you which service you want – police, fire brigade or ambulance. In the event of a medical emergency, ask for an ambulance. They may also ask what state and town you are calling from, particularly if you are calling from a mobile
- **Answer the questions that are asked** – you will then be connected to an ambulance control centre in your state or territory. The control centre

officer will ask you some important questions, like your address, phone number and the patient's condition. Based on the answers you give, the officer will be able to assess the situation and organise the most appropriate service as quickly as possible. They may also give you some simple first-aid instructions over the phone if necessary

- **Keep as calm as possible and be clear** – it is important that the officer is able to understand the answers that you give. You may want the ambulance to hurry but try to stay as calm as possible and speak as clearly as possible. As frustrating as it may seem, it may be necessary for the officer to ask you to repeat your answers if they are unable to clearly hear what you said
- **Do not hang-up and wait for more instructions** – if a life-threatening injury or illness has been identified, an ambulance will be sent immediately. The officer will then ask additional questions to give the paramedics as much information as possible. The control centre officer can also provide further assistance and/or medical advice and instructions depending on the medical emergency

It is important to note that based on the answers provided, the control centre officer may decide that sending an ambulance is not required. At that point, depending on the state or territory that you live in, you may be transferred to a nurse for further assistance.

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The information that you will need to have when you make the call is as follows:

■ **Where are you? What is the exact address?**

Try to provide as much information as you can, if you can identify the nearest intersection or cross street that can be really useful. Any identifying landmarks can also be helpful (particularly if you are in a rural area) to ensure the paramedics get there as quickly as possible

■ **What number are you calling from?** This is needed just in case the control centre needs to call you back to get extra information

■ **What is the problem?** Tell the officer who is sick or hurt and what has happened to them. They will also ask how old the person is

■ **Is the person conscious?** Are you able to wake the person up? If you can't it is likely that they will ask you other questions about their breathing

If you believe you may be difficult to find, organise to have someone waiting at a prearranged meeting point to greet the paramedics and bring them to the sick or injured person

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