

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 scary but knowing what to do and the questions you will be asked can make things easier.

There are 5 simple steps to follow when faced with an emergency and need medical assistance:

1. **Call 000**
2. **Ask for an ambulance**
3. **Answer the questions that are asked**
4. **Do not hang-up and wait for more instructions**
5. **Keep as calm as possible and speak slowly and clearly**

The following questions will be asked when you make the emergency call:

- **where are you? What is the exact address or location?**
- **what number are you calling from?**
- **what is the problem?**
- **is the person conscious?**

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.

Contacting the emergency services

You can call Triple Zero (000) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from any landline, pay phone or mobile phone. Calls to 000 are always free and you can call the number even if you do not have any credit or your phone is locked.

People who do not speak English can ask the operator for an interpreter. There may be a short wait while an interpreter is made available.

People who are deaf or have a hearing impairment can use a TTY/text phone to call a text-based Emergency Call Service by dialing 106. The 106 service is not currently accessible via mobile text or SMS messaging.

5 steps to follow when faced with an emergency and need medical assistance

1. **Call 000**
2. **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 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. You will then be

connected to an ambulance control centre in your state or territory.

3. **Answer the questions that are asked** – the control centre officer will ask you some important questions, such as your address, your phone number and the patient's condition. Based on your answers, 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.
4. **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 further questions in order to pass on as much information to the paramedics as possible. The control centre officer can also provide further assistance and/or medical advice and instructions, depending on the medical emergency.
5. **Keep as calm as possible and be clear** – it is important that the officer is able to understand your answers. 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 say.

Based on the answers provided, the control centre officer may decide that sending an ambulance is not

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required. At that point, depending on the state or territory that you live in, you may be transferred to a nurse for further assistance.

What questions will be asked when you call 000?

When you have been put through to the ambulance control centre, the officer will ask you some questions. Your answers will help them to assess the situation and get the appropriate help to you as quickly as possible. You will need the following information:

■ **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

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

- **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

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