



# How to call for emergency medical help

NSW Ambulance provides emergency health services to the people of New South Wales. We provide emergency medical care whether you live in a metropolitan, rural or regional area. We also provide emergency transport if necessary due to your medical condition. We make sure that patients get the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

## Calling for help

Medical emergencies require urgent attention. Examples of medical emergencies include:

- Sudden collapse
- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulty
- Sudden numbness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg
- Fractured bones
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Other serious medical conditions
- Motor vehicle accidents

It is very important to know how to call for help if someone is seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help. In a medical emergency, you should call Triple Zero (000) whether or not you can speak English well. The Triple Zero (000) service is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and always free-of-charge.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing callers can call Triple Zero (000) via the National Relay Service or use your TTY to dial 106.

## What information we will need

A Triple Zero (000) operator will ask whether you need 'Police', 'Fire' or 'Ambulance'. When you ask for 'Ambulance', you will be connected to a NSW Ambulance Control Centre. If a call taker has difficulty understanding you, they may ask what language you prefer to speak and arrange a telephone interpreter to facilitate communication.

The call taker will ask you a standard set of questions to help us organise the most appropriate service as quickly as possible. These questions include:

- What is the exact address of the emergency?
- What is the phone number you are calling from?
- What is the problem, tell me exactly what happened?
- How old is the patient?
- Is the patient conscious?
- Is the patient breathing?

It is important to stay calm and provide information clearly.





## What happens next

Do not hang up. Stay on the line for more instructions.

The call taker may ask you additional questions and can also provide further assistance and medical advice over the phone depending on the emergency.

If you have a life-threatening injury or illness, paramedics will be sent immediately.

If you do not have a life-threatening injury or illness, but require medical assistance, paramedics will be sent in an appropriate time frame for your condition.

If you do not require onsite medical assistance, your call may be transferred to a registered nurse who can provide you with over-the-phone advice and direct you to alternate healthcare providers.

## When waiting for an ambulance to arrive

- Ensure there is a clear pathway to the entrance of your property. This may involve moving objects such as cars, pot plants or furniture. The paramedics may need to take a stretcher or equipment to where the patient is located.
- Lock away any pets.
- Pack any items of clothing or toiletries the patient may need in a small bag.
- Make sure you have the following information ready for the paramedics: the patient's health record, regular medication, allergies, and special requirements.
- Remember to bring all relevant pension or health cards, a list of contact numbers for family or friends, and a set of your property keys.
- Have someone check that all doors and windows are locked, and any unnecessary electrical appliances are turned off such as heaters.

## Important tips

- Remember, ambulances are available for saving lives and are not taxis. Calling an ambulance for non-urgent conditions could cost someone their life.
- It is important to teach children and overseas visitors that the emergency number to call in Australia is Triple Zero (000), as well as your address and phone number.
- If calling from a house, apartment or business address, ensure that the building number is clearly visible from the street.
- If you are in a hard-to-find location, have someone wait outside the building/location to wave the ambulance down, or leave the front light on at night.
- If you live in a rural area or an area difficult to find, remember landmarks such as 'yellow house with blue picket fence' for example.
- Road users must give way to ambulances. As soon as you see the flashing lights or hear a siren, you must make way for the ambulance to pass. Don't panic or break traffic rules. Generally move safely to the left.

**For more information about how to call for emergency medical help, please visit NSW Ambulance's website:**  
[www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au)



**NSW Ambulance**

excellence in care