

Calling 000 for ambulance

June 2009

The emergency number in Australia is triple zero (000). Triple zero (000) is a free call from any phone, mobile or phone box.

When dialling triple zero (000), you will hear a short recorded message stating that you have dialled the emergency number, then a Telstra operator will ask which service you require – police, fire or ambulance, YOU MUST STAY ON THE LINE. In the event of a medical emergency, ask for AMBULANCE. The operator will confirm what state and town you are calling from. If you are calling from South Australia, you will be connected to the SA Ambulance Service Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in Adelaide and asked a standard set of questions by an EOC Emergency Medical Dispatch Support Officer (EMDSO).

It is important to stay calm, speak clearly and answer all of the operator's questions.

Mobile phones

When possible, it's recommended that you contact Ambulance by calling triple zero (000) from a land line phone. At any one time, mobile network capacity, and even the number of users in a particular location, can affect your ability to make a call in an emergency using a mobile phone.

If you have no alternative but to use a mobile phone to call for an ambulance, dial triple zero (000) or '112'. Contact can even be made if your mobile has been blocked or your security settings have been activated.

If you do not have reception with your own mobile phone carrier, dial '112' and your call will be carried if another GSM network is available. It is important to note that '112' will not work from a land line fixed phone.

Tip: *When travelling in remote and rural areas, organise to take a satellite phone or a two-way radio/CB with you in case you are travelling in areas with no network coverage.*

Ensuring access for all South Australians

It's important that everyone has access to immediate medical assistance in an emergency. To ensure that the triple zero (000) emergency network is accessible for all South Australians, there are a number of services available to assist those with limited language skills and hearing or speech impairments.

Calling an ambulance – QUICK TIPS

- > The emergency number in Australia is **000**. That is, triple zero (000).
- > This is a free call from any phone.
- > When dialling **000** an operator will ask which service you require.
- > Ask for AMBULANCE.
- > You need to specify which state and town you are calling from.
- > You will be asked a standard set of questions by the operator to help provide you with medical assistance as quickly as possible.
- > Stay calm and speak slowly.

Interpreter services

All callers should dial triple zero (000) in an emergency, regardless of their level of English or native language.

If a patient or caller cannot understand the EMDSO, we ask callers to say their native language clearly three times in a row.

For example, "Dinka, Dinka, Dinka".

An EMDSO can then access the interpreter service and a third person can help the caller answer the required questions.

Hearing or speech impairment

People with a hearing or speech impairment can gain access to the triple zero (000) by dialling 106 through a TTY (teletypewriter) or computer with modem.

The 106 number provides the same service as the triple zero (000) number, but is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment.

106 is a toll-free number provided as part of the National Relay Service. This text based emergency service allows callers to pass on text information to a relay officer. The relay officer will then contact SA Ambulance Service on behalf of the patient and relay all of the details required for an appropriate ambulance response.

Important questions you must answer when calling triple zero (000)

- > 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 he/she?
- > Is he/she conscious?
- > Is he/she breathing?

Additional questions will then be asked by the operator depending on what has happened. The operator will also provide further assistance or instructions depending on the situation.

SA Ambulance Service

Teaching children and visitors

It is important to teach children how to call triple zero (000) and to advise personal information such as their name, address and phone number.

Make sure you teach visitors to Australia how to call triple zero (000) and what kind of questions they will be asked.

Put your address and telephone number on, or near, your phone to help children or just in case a visitor or neighbour calls triple zero (000) on your behalf.

What types of questions will the EMDSO ask me?

In order to get the most appropriate response to your emergency everyone who calls triple zero (000) will be asked a standard set of questions by the ambulance EMDSO.

These are examples of the important questions asked by our operators.

- > What is the exact address of the emergency? *(The operator will ask for the suburb name and nearest cross street).*
- > What is the phone number you are calling from? *(This information is important in case the operations centre needs to call back to obtain further information or if the phone cuts out).*
- > What is the problem, tell me exactly what happened? *(This is vital to helping us send the most appropriate person to treat you. Should the caller not understand the question it will be rephrased and repeated).*
- > How old is he/she? *(The approximate age is fine if you are unsure).*
- > Is he/she conscious? *(Yes or no answer required).*
- > Is he/she breathing? *(Yes or no answer required).*

Once you have answered these questions the most appropriate ambulance response will be provided. It is important that you remain calm and do not hang up until the EMDSO has obtained the required information and tells you to hang up.

Dependant on the situation the EMDSO may ask you further questions. Remember the EMDSO is there to help you and can provide you with first aid advice and specific instructions on how to manage the patient. These instructions will be dependant on the situation.

Please note an ambulance will be dispatched while additional questions are asked.

For example, if you ring about a person suffering from chest pain you may be asked the following additional questions regarding the patient.

- > Is he/she completely awake?
- > Is he/she breathing normally?

- > Is he/she changing colour?
- > Is he/she clammy?
- > Does he/she have a history of heart problems?
- > Did he/she take any drugs of medication in the past 12 hours?

Answering these questions to the best of your ability ensures we have the most information about the patient's condition.

Tips for calling triple zero (000)

- > If calling from a house, unit, flat or business address, ensure that the house/street 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 'house with blue and white fence', for example.
- > Make it a habit to note street names of places you frequent such as shops, schools, parks, restaurants, clubs and sporting grounds. This could assist you to give more detailed information.
- > If you are travelling in an unfamiliar area, take note of street names.
- > Always provide accurate information to help us get help you quickly.
- > Remain calm. Do not hang up the phone until the EMDSO tells you to hang up.

Is there anything else I can do before the paramedic/ ambulance officer arrives?

- > Lock away any pets.
- > Pack any items of clothing or accessories you may need in a small bag.
- > Make sure you have all your regular medication ready to take with you. It's always handy to have a medication list to give to the paramedic/ambulance officer.
- > Notify the paramedic/ambulance officer of any allergies or special requirements you may have.
- > Ensure you have all relevant pension or health cards.
- > Do not take items of value with you.
- > Do not forget to take a set of property keys with you.
- > Have someone check that all doors and windows are locked and all electrical appliances are turned off.

Stay focused, stay relevant and stay on the line.

For more information

Corporate Communications
GPO Box 3
Adelaide SA 5001
Telephone: 1300 13 62 72
www.saambulance.com.au

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