Emergency calls

How and when to call the emergency services in Australia

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Triple Zero (000)

Triple Zero (000) is Australia's main emergency service number. You should call 000 if you need urgent help from police, fire or ambulance services.

Telstra answers calls to the emergency service numbers 000 and 112 and transfers the call, and information about your location, to the emergency service you request.

You should only call 000 when:

- someone is seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help
- your life or property is being threatened
- you have just witnessed a serious accident or crime

If a situation is not urgent, you should look up the number of your local police, fire or ambulance service.

Other emergency service numbers

Australia also has 2 other emergency service numbers, but they only work on some services:

- 112 can only be dialed on a mobile phone
- 106 can only be used with a teletypewriter (TTY) or a device for the deaf. 106 is a text-based emergency service number for people who are deaf, or who have a hearing or speech impairment

Call charges

You will not be charged for calling Triple Zero (000). These calls are free from any kind of phone.

Types of phone services you can use

You can call 000 from any fixed or mobile phone and certain VoIP and satellite services.

You can also call 000 from any 'handheld' satellite phone.

You can call 000 using the Emergency+ app on your smartphone. One advantage of using the Emergency+ app to call 000 is that if you don't know your exact location, the app will use the GPS on your smartphone to help you to give emergency services your location.

The Emergency+ app is available to download free of charge from the Google Play store and Apple App store.

Locked handsets

You can call 000 without having to unlock the keypad or enter a security-protection Personal Identification Number (PIN). You should check your handset manual for information about emergency call dialing.

Network coverage

You can call 000 even if your mobile provider does not have network coverage in the area.

Your call to 000 will be carried on any available mobile network.

You must be in the coverage area of one of the mobile providers in Australia to make emergency calls.

Text messages

You cannot contact 000 or 112 by text message.

When you dial Triple Zero (000)

When you dial 000 you will first hear the recorded message 'You have dialed emergency Triple Zero. Your call is being connected.'

Your call is then answered by a Telstra operator who will ask whether you need police, fire or ambulance. You may also be asked to give the state and town you are calling from. The

operator will then connect you to the emergency service you requested and will stay on the line with you until the call is answered by them.

In extreme events, such as major bushfires or storms, there may be a short delay before your call is answered due to a higher number of calls. You should stay on the line if this happens or you will lose your place in the queue.

How to give your location

From a fixed line phone

The address details for the fixed line will automatically appear on the operator's screen and be given to the emergency service organisation you requested.

From a mobile or VoIP service

The operator will ask you for the town and state you are calling from. This is because you may not be at your home or billing address.

Use the Emergency+ app

The Emergency+ app can help you if you don't know your exact location when you call 000. The app uses the GPS on your smartphone to give you a street address where available, or 3 words (go to what3words for further information) that help the operator identify your location.

Hearing or speech impairments

People who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can use a TTY to call 106. 106 is a text-based Emergency Call Service provided as a part of the National Relay Service (NRS).

When you call 106, the operator will connect you with the emergency service organisation (police, fire or ambulance) you request.

You cannot access 106 by SMS.

You can also ask the NRS for a captioned relay, internet relay, SMS relay, video relay or voice relay call to be transferred to

Triple Zero if you need emergency help from police, fire or an ambulance service.

If you're unable to speak to the Triple Zero (000) operator

You can still receive emergency help if it is not safe to speak, or you cannot speak.

When a 000 caller doesn't respond to the operator's question *'Emergency. Police? Fire? Ambulance?'* the call is transferred to an interactive voice response (IVR). The IVR asks you to press '55' if you require emergency help. If you don't press '55' after being asked three times, your call will be disconnected.

If you press '55' you will be connected to the police. If you are still unable to speak, the police will attempt to call you back and might also send a patrol car to your address.

Police will use the address for the service (which would usually be either your home or billing address). This means it is important to make sure that your telco has the most up-to-date address details for your phone services.

If you are calling from a mobile service and are not at your service address, police will try to locate you and respond to your request. But this may not always be possible without an address or accurate location information. If you can speak and provide your location, you should do so. This will ensure police can respond quickly.

Advanced mobile location (AML) technology, which can provide latitude and longitude coordinates of the mobile handset location, is available on select Apple IOS (and Watch OS GPS + Cellular) and Android devices. This helps to locate callers who are not calling from their service address.

For more information on AML and to check if your phone is AML-capable, visit the Triple Zero website .

Power outages

Calling 000 during a power outage depends on the type of phone and service you are using.

Non NBN service

If your landline service hasn't been transferred to the NBN network, you can still call 000 if your phone is plugged directly into a phone socket.

These phones normally receive their power direct from the phone network. Cordless phones need a power source, so you won't be able to call 000 if there is a power outage.

NBN service

Most services connected to the NBN network won't work during a power outage. This means you won't be able to call 000 in a power outage.

It's a good idea to have another way of contacting 000 in a power outage, such as a charged mobile phone.

911

You cannot call 911. This number is used by emergency services in the United States and can't be used to call emergency services in Australia.

State Emergency Service (SES)

You cannot contact the SES by dialing 000. Calls to 000 can only be transferred to police, fire or ambulance services.

The phone number for all SES units is 132 500.

Translators for non-English speakers

Triple Zero does not have translators. Calls from non-English speakers will be transferred to the police in their capital city. Once connected, a translator will be arranged.

Other resources

We have a range of emergency call service posters and kids' activities to promote awareness of Triple Zero (000).

Next up: Emergency call service posters and activities ›