



Requesting an ambulance

A guide for healthcare professionals

Step 1 - Decide how urgently you require a response

The appropriate response levels for common clinical presentations are shown in the table below. Use the table to decide on the response that you feel is appropriate. It is important that you base this on the clinical needs of the patients; an ambulance inappropriately responding to a less urgent case on blue lights is unable to respond to a call for help from someone in the community who is in need of immediate care.

When a time critical response is requested it is expected that the healthcare professional will remain with the patient until the ambulance arrives. Any patient who clinically requires an emergency ambulance within 8 minutes is by definition at risk of rapidly deteriorating.

It is common for an ambulance to arrive at a patient's home address for an urgent admission, only to find that they had been able to drive or arrange a lift back from the Doctor's Surgery. If a patient is able to arrange their own transport and it is clinically safe do so, encouraging them to get themselves to hospital saves ambulances for patients who really need them.

Category	Clinically Appropriate Examples	Response	Telephone Number
TIME CRITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Airway compromise ▮ Aneurysm ▮ Asthma Attack ▮ Major haemorrhage (>1 mug adult, ½ mug child) ▮ Meningitis ▮ Myocardial Infarction ▮ Respiratory or cardiac arrest ▮ Seizure (still fitting) ▮ Septic shock ▮ Severe dyspnoea ▮ Stroke (new onset) ▮ Unconsciousness 	Blue light response within 8 minutes	999
IMMEDIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Severe abdominal pain ▮ Suspected neck of Femur Fractures ▮ Cerebral haemorrhage 	Blue light response within 30 minutes	
URGENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Chest infection ▮ Urinary infection ▮ Unable to cope at home ▮ Mobility issues ▮ Mental health admission (2 hours) 	Normal road speed response within in 1, 2 or 4 hours	Dorset 0845 757 3302 Cornwall, Devon and Somerset 0845 602 0455 Avon, Gloucester and Wiltshire 0845 1206342

HCP DEDICATED TELEPHONE NUMBERS MUST NOT BE GIVEN OUT TO THE PUBLIC





Step 2 - Dial the appropriate number

Dialling the appropriate number helps us to prioritise calls to patients in a time critical condition.

PLEASE ONLY CALL 999 IN A CLINICAL EMERGENCY.

It is important that wherever possible, the telephone call is made by a **health care professional**, as the triage process requires a range of clinical information. In exceptional cases where this is not possible, it is vital that the non-clinician making the call is aware of the clinical information that will be required.

Step 3 - Provide the patient's details

Your call will be answered by an Emergency Medical Advisor in our Clinical Hub (Control Centre), who will ask a number of questions to help determine the most appropriate response for the patient. Every day we have to co-ordinate the most appropriate response to over 3,000 calls; we depend on the information you provide to ensure that we prioritise each case correctly.

Senior Nurses and Paramedics work within the Clinical Hub to review all healthcare professional calls. They review the details you provide, and if we are unable to make the timeframe specified, telephone the patient to determine whether we may need to upgrade the response. It is important that you inform us of any clinical observations which have been taken, as these often prove useful.

It is also important that you clearly state if the patient:

- Is potentially infectious, including diarrhoea and vomiting;
- Has a DNAR or Advanced Decision to Refuse Treatment (Living Will);
- Is a compulsory admission under the Mental Health Act;
- Is over 28 stone/177kg (bariatric stretcher required)
- Is connected to a medical device which must be transported with them e.g. syringe drive;
- Is at an address which may be difficult to find - including any useful directions.

Step 4 - Advise if you need a Paramedic level response

You will be asked whether you need a Paramedic level response. Requesting a paramedic does not result in a quicker response. In fact for patients who do not clinically require this level of care, it means that non-paramedic ambulances which may be closer to the incident will not be sent. In the case of time critical and immediate calls please be aware that the nearest ambulance response will be sent. Whilst this normally includes a Paramedic, sometimes this may not be possible. In these cases, additional Paramedic back-up will be provided if required.

As a general guide, a Paramedic should only be requested if the patient needs advanced assessment or interventions, or is likely to deteriorate on-route. Examples include:

- IV medicines or fluid administration;
- IV analgesia;
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation;
- Intubation;
- ECG interpretation.