

Use of Mobile Phones In Emergency

Mobile phones can work if you are near a township or highway, however phone network coverage is not complete in remote areas of Australia. In an emergency it is generally the fastest and easiest way to summon help. Your best chance of coverage is from a high spot such as a hill or lookout, but you are unlikely to ever get coverage in a canyon or gorge. If you don't have enough coverage to make a voice call sometimes you can still send a text message (SMS) as it often works with lower signal strength than is required for a voice call.

If you are using a mobile phone to dial emergency, the first number to try is 000. This will connect you to the emergency operator using your normal phone provider. If you cannot connect to the operator with 000 for any reason (including no coverage) it is recommended you then try 112. 112 will also connect you to the same operator as 000 emergency but has a number of additional benefits:

1. It is an international standard that a mobile phone dialling 112 is an emergency call. If you dial 112 with a GSM phone anywhere in the world it will connect you to the local emergency operator.
2. 000 will only work with the phone service provider you are subscribed to. If any provider detects a 112 call they will connect you. This means, for instance, if you are a Vodaphone customer and are in an area which does not have Vodaphone coverage but does have Telstra coverage, Telstra will connect a 112 call for you. Telstra would not connect a 000 call made on a Vodaphone mobile phone.
3. If a mobile phone network is running at capacity a 112 call will cause a non-emergency call to be dropped immediately to make capacity available. This does not necessarily occur with 000. This means if the network is running at capacity and you call 000 you may not get connected.
4. 112 will work even if the GSM or 3G or Next G phone has NO SIM card or is LOCKED. *[Note that Telstra's Next G™ network operates on 850 MHz whereas the Telstra 3G (and all other Australian and most overseas 3G networks) operate on 2100 MHz. Next G™ has the same coverage as Telstra GSM and CDMA combined, whereas 3G is confined to the capital cities].*

Note that 112 may not work with some CDMA mobile phones. Check with your mobile phone service provider if you wish to know whether 112 works with your phone. Note also that dialling 112 from a fixed (land) line will not work—it is for mobile phones only.

If you are deaf or mute, or cannot speak at the time, or your mobile signal is very weak, send an SMS to the emergency SMS call centre (106). They will communicate back with you via SMS.

Never use “911” for an emergency call in Australia—it will not work.

When you get through to an operator you will be asked which service you require. If you have a medical emergency you should ask for Ambulance, if you have a situation where you require rescue you should ask for Police. The operator may ask for a street and nearest cross street. The operator is trying to find where you are so you can be connected to the local emergency service for your location. In a remote area "street and cross street" is often not appropriate so you may have to explain the situation and suggest a nearby landmark the operator would be able to identify, such as a nearby lookout, mountain top, access road or river. If the operator insists on a street and cross street ask to talk to their supervisor. When you are connected to the service you require you should start being more specific about your location using grid references or local landmarks. Try to minimise mistakes with grid references by also giving a nearby landmark.

Do not hang up until you have confirmed that it is OK to do so. Keep your phone on if possible as they may try to ring you back, but be aware of the limited battery life of phones. If you are running low on battery life you should consider using text messages (SMS) as they use much less battery power than voice calls. If you turn your phone off to save battery life make sure you arrange a time with emergency services to turn it back on again.

In summary (for more information, see: [click here](#))

- If you have mobile phone coverage, dial “000”
- If you don't have mobile phone coverage, try “112”
- If you cannot speak or hear or have a signal that is too weak for voice calls, send an SMS to “106”
- In all cases, do not hang up or leave the spot you are calling from until told to do so.