



2021

Queensland Ambulance Service

Requesting an ambulance

What's changing ?

- » The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) is enhancing how calls are triaged when ambulance services are requested by health professionals.
- » Whenever possible in a health care setting, a clinical person such as a doctor or Registered Nurse (RN) should make the call to Triple Zero (000). If non-clinical staff call Triple Zero (000) and request an ambulance, the QAS Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) will ask to speak to the clinician on scene.
- » Doctors, paramedics and RNs, excluding Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) will still be able to use the category system, so long as the clinician makes the Triple Zero (000) call.
- » All other clinicians (including RNs from RACFs) will be asked further triage questions by the EMD to ensure an appropriate triage category is assigned to the case.

Why is this process changing?

- » For the safety of all patients it is vital that the priority of ambulance response is proportional to the severity of the patient's clinical condition.
- » Using the category system limits the amount of clinical information collected by the QAS EMD, which in turn reduces the ability to make informed clinical decisions regarding dispatch.
- » The information gathered through asking supplementary triage questions will be used by the QAS clinicians, including doctors and paramedics in the Operation Centres, to prioritise cases and undertake clinical risk assessments.
- » Gathering this information at the time of call will assist in reducing the number of call backs to scene to gain further clinical information.
- » The additional questions asked will only take 1–2 minutes and will not delay the ambulance response in the case of an immediately life-threatening emergency.

What is the impact?

- » When healthcare personnel calls Triple Zero (000) and states that the patient's problem is immediately life-threatening (Category 1 and 2), an ambulance will be sent to the health facility under lights and sirens. This may mean a patient with a time-critical condition in the community has to wait longer for an ambulance and this may adversely impact their outcome.
- » In contrast, when a lower priority request is placed there are times when the patient's condition is of a higher criticality than the requested category. The QAS wants to ensure that all cases are triaged in an appropriate manner and responded to in the shortest possible timeframe.
- » During times of significant demand, one of the QAS clinical doctors or paramedics may call back to speak with a RN or doctor on scene to ask clarifying questions.

