

# Podcast 90 – It's An Emergency

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia,  
with Rob McCormack

*Podcast Number 90 – It's An Emergency*

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast90.mp3>

Hi,

Sometimes people find themselves in an emergency situation. Often, people's lives can be in danger and help or assistance is urgently required. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little more about how people in Australia can get emergency assistance.

Most people can remember a time where they have been involved in, or have been a witness to, a bad accident. Unfortunately, bad accidents can and do happen. It might be a car accident, or an accident at home or on a work site, but whatever the situation, you will know straight away that someone has been badly hurt and needs urgent medical help. Alternatively, it might be a situation where a serious crime is being committed, such as a robbery, or even a violent assault. In a situation like that, you know that the police must be called. An equally frightening situation is when something catches fire. Fires can spread very quickly and put people's lives and property in danger, so in such a situation, you realize instantly that fire fighters need to come, and quickly.



In Australia, there is only one telephone number needed to call police, fire or ambulance in such an emergency situation – 000. I will give only a summary of this service in this podcast. For full details, you should go to [www.triplezero.gov.au](http://www.triplezero.gov.au).

Calls to 000 are free and can be made from any phone, whether it is a mobile phone, home phone, work phone or a pay phone. It also works from an Australian satellite phone. This free service operates in all parts of Australia 24 hours a day. It even operates if your mobile phone has no credit and may even still operate if your mobile phone is saying it has no network reception. It does this by transferring your emergency call to any other available mobile phone network in the area where you are located.

I experienced this situation once, when I had witnessed a road accident on an isolated country road, where someone was injured and needed an ambulance. I knew immediately that an ambulance was needed, but when I looked at my phone, I saw that there was no mobile phone network reception from my phone company. I thought, what will I do now? I can't call for an ambulance. There were other people with me and one of them rang 000 without looking whether his phone had network

reception. I was amazed when he got connected and was able to call for an ambulance, despite his phone showing no reception. I discovered later that a 000 call can go through on another mobile network which does have reception in the area, not the one you are using. Wow, that is worth remembering.

Another point to remember is that, on any mobile phone sold in Australia, you can make an emergency call to 000 without having to unlock the keypad. This will be the case when you have set up your phone with a PIN (or Personal Identification Number). If you look below the number pad, you will see a button marked 'Emergency Call'. So you won't need to unlock the phone in order to call 000. As long as the battery in the phone is still working, and there is mobile phone reception where you are located, you will be able to make an emergency 000 call. By the way, you should never, ever test this on your mobile phone. The 000 emergency call is not for practising. You must only use it if you really need to.

So what happens when you call 000? An operator will answer and will ask you whether you want Police, Fire or Ambulance. If you are calling from a mobile phone or satellite phone, the 000 operator will also ask you about your location. This is because they will be unable to tell where you are located. If you call from a home phone, then they will know immediately where you are calling from and won't need to ask you. You will then be transferred to the emergency service you have asked for. They will take all the details.

It's important to remember that you must try and stay calm and give the information about the situation clearly and accurately. I have called 000 at least once some years ago and, I must admit, it can sometimes be difficult to stay calm, especially if you know that help needs to come quickly. My experience was that the operator spoke in a calm voice and asked their questions clearly. They helped me to stay calm too which was a good thing. It's also important that you don't

hang up on the operator until they have all the information they need. They will tell you when that is the case. Often, it will be very important that you give accurate information about your location, so that the emergency services can find where the emergency situation is located. It can often be useful to wait for them in a place where they will easily be able to see you when they arrive. After all, reducing the time taken for them to find the emergency situation may be important in saving a life or saving someone's property.

In case the caller doesn't speak English, our emergency services are also prepared. Once you are connected, you must stay on the line and an interpreter will be organized.

I have seen how efficiently and smoothly our 000 system works, and as an Australian I am very proud of our police, fire and ambulance workers. Every day, they save the lives and property of Australians.



If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at [rob@slowenglish.info](mailto:rob@slowenglish.info). I would love to

hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

## Podcast 90 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

### Vocabulary

accident = when something goes wrong, like a car crash

accurately = when you make no mistakes

alternatively = another way or another view

amazed = when you are surprised by something

ambulance = the special car or van which takes a sick or injured person to hospital

assistance = help

battery = that part of the phone which gives power

calm = when you are not upset or excited

catches fire = when a fire starts

committed a crime = when someone has broken the law

connected = when you have reached someone else on your phone

credit = when you have some paid some money and you can use your phone

crime = when someone breaks the law

despite = even though, nonetheless, notwithstanding

details = the information

discovered = to find something out, to learn something

efficiently = well

emergency = when something happens that is dangerous, when someone's life may be in danger

experienced = when you have done something before

hang up = to finish your phone call

interpreter = a person who can translate another language

involved = when you are part of something

isolated = a long way from other people

located = where something is

medical help = help from doctors or nurses or paramedics

network reception = when your phone is connected and can be used to make a call

operates = works, runs, goes

operator = the person who is using a machine or device

pay phone = a phone in a public place. You must put money in it to use it

practising = doing something many times so you are able to do it well

property = the things that belong to you. For example, a house, a car

robbery = when a person takes something that is not theirs

satellite = a space vehicle going around the earth. Used for messaging

serious = very bad

site = a place

situation = how things are at a point in time

smoothly = without problems

spread = goes from one place to another

transferring = going from one place to another place

urgently required = when something is needed straight away, right now

violent assault = when someone hits or strikes another person, hurting them

witness = a person who sees an event and can say what happened