



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**F**ew road users are aware of the factors that could determine the time needed to respond to a vehicle accident. It is important for road users to be aware of these factors as well as steps that they can take to assist emergency teams in responding swiftly to accidents. Emergency response providers have provided information to the Arrive Alive road safety website on this topic.

### What is the process of responding to an emergency call from the time it is made?

All emergency medical calls are categorised and prioritised when we receive them and resources are allocated according to the category and priority of the call as well as available resources at the time.

The process we follow is very straight forward and consistent in that we ask for caller number and name, what the emergency is (to enable categorisation and priority) and where the emergency is (all demographic information).

This information is sent to the Emergency dispatchers through our Integrated Call Taking and immediate dispatch system who then use satellite tracking to

allocate the closest, most appropriate resources to the call.

### Which factors play a role in determining the time before a response vehicle will arrive at an accident scene?

Several factors may influence this including:

- Callers not able to tell us what the problem is.
- Third party callers that are not with the patient result in further phone calls to establish the nature of the emergency.
- Inaccurate demographic information - we often struggle to get accurate address details from callers.
- Cross streets are not known, callers do not know what suburbs they live in or cannot give



us landmarks to pass on the staff who will attend to the scene.

- We often conference responders to callers to try and find the scenes.
- Informal settlement streets are not captured and some of the new estates do not have their internal road systems mapped.
- Meeting points are usually agreed where we then rely on a third party (friend, family, member of the public or security) to direct us to the scene.
- Availability and location of resources - we send our closest available resource according to their position in relation to the incident at the time. If our own resources are not available we will ask service providers in the area to assist where we do not have resources.
- Traffic - we are finding it increasingly difficult to access certain areas during peak traffic times and emergency lanes are often used by non emergency vehicles or have been allocated as additional lanes to assist traffic flow.
- Some drivers are also reluctant to give way to emergency vehicles.

### What can possibly the reason for any additional delays?

Additional delays do come in where resources may be directed to higher priority calls or the vehicles themselves are unable to continue responding due to being involved in accidents themselves.

Adverse weather conditions may also cause further delays as normal response driving is not possible.

Access to the scene of the emergency and the patient is also sometimes restricted - bystanders getting in the way or properties not being easy to access once the vehicles arrive.

### How can the public assist in improving the possibility of emergency response vehicles arriving swiftly at accident scenes?

Several things can be done by the public:

- Ensuring they have information on hand when

calling - accurate address details and nature of the incident.

- Landmarks are useful and if no street names exist, agree on a meeting area at a specific landmark.
- Allowing emergency vehicle right of way to respond to the emergencies and giving way timeously.
- Allowing access to the scene of the incident and patient/s.
- Send someone to meet the vehicles, ensure that security at entrance points are made aware of emergencies in complexes, switch on some outside lights if incident is at night, clear access routes and lock away any dangerous or vicious domestic animals.

### What should the public be aware of at the accident scene? - How should they behave so that emergency treatment can be delivered effectively?

- Emergency services personnel need access to the scene and patients and members of the public can assist by allowing this and leaving them to do their jobs.
- Once the emergency personnel arrive, leave it to them.
- Safety of the public is also a top priority and they must not approach any dangerous area or situation as they may just end up adding to the casualties and increase the workload for the emergency services.
- Keep updating the call centre if anything changes or you are concerned about anything else as they may need to change the level of the response or the resources allocated to it and can relay further information to the response team.

