**10 September 2015**

**Medical emergency? Call triple zero (000)**

SA Ambulance Service is reminding country communities across South Australia to call triple zero (000) in a medical emergency.

Director, service delivery (country) David Place said calling triple zero (000) for an ambulance can be the difference between life and death.

“Some people think it will be quicker to drive to hospital rather than wait for an ambulance,” he said.

“However, people don't realise they may put themselves and other road users in danger by doing so, especially if their condition unexpectedly worsens on the way, which does happen.

“Calling triple zero (000) gives you immediate access to expert medical care and that saves lives.

“No matter what the situation, our highly trained emergency call takers will talk you through exactly how to help the patient – all while an ambulance is on its way.

“The most important thing is to stay on the line and follow the emergency call taker’s instructions.

“Once the ambulance arrives the crew starts life-saving treatment and, if transport to hospital is required, they continue treatment and monitoring in the ambulance.

“Some people don’t feel comfortable calling an ambulance because they don’t think their emergency is serious, or they’re afraid they’ll wake someone up.

“Paramedics and ambulance officers are trained and prepared to respond to emergencies any time of the day or night.”

The majority of country areas in the state are serviced by volunteer ambulance officers, according to Mr Place.

“Whist the existing ambulance officers do a great job in assisting our communities, having more volunteers will help spread the workload.

“SA Ambulance Service provides vehicles, equipment, training and reimbursement of expenses, but more volunteers in smaller country communities will ensure a local ambulance response.

“Rest assured if you call triple zero (000), an ambulance will always come.”

To learn more about being a volunteer ambulance officer head to [saambulance.com.au](http://www.saambulance.com.au) or call 1800 655 306.

SA Ambulance Service shared some helpful information to show what happens when you call an ambulance.

**Simple tips to make it easier for the ambulance to find you:**

* Ensure your property number is easily visible from the road.
* Know the name of your closest intersecting street or landmarks that will help the ambulance crew locate your property.
* At night, put on a light outside your house.
* If possible, have someone wait outside for the ambulance.
* If you’re in or near a vehicle, put the hazard lights on.
* Call from a landline where possible as we can immediately see the address of that phone. Ideally, use a portable landline phone so you can move to be near the patient and follow directions of the emergency call taker, such as providing first aid, locking away pets, gathering any medications and unlocking the front door for the ambulance crew.
* Ensure children and overseas visitors know their address and how to call triple zero (000).
* If using a mobile phone, be aware that you don’t need phone reception or a SIM card to call triple zero (000).

**What happens when you call triple zero (000):**

* Your call is answered by a Telstra operator who will ask which service you require and confirm which state and town you’re calling from.
* If you say ‘ambulance’ and are in South Australia, your call will be transferred to SA Ambulance Service’s Emergency Operations Centre in Adelaide.
* First, the emergency call taker will ask for the exact location of your emergency. Only once your location is known can help be sent. While SA Ambulance Service has a number of tools to assist us in locating patients, we rely heavily on the address and any special access instructions provided by the triple zero (000) callers.
* The emergency call taker will also ask what phone number you’re calling from and get you to confirm both these pieces of information.
* You will then be asked a number of questions about the patient’s condition to ensure the correct first aid is provided until the ambulance arrives.