

Emergency calls and the National Relay Service

As an Emergency Services operator, you may receive emergency calls via the National Relay Service (NRS) from people who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment.

The NRS is a government initiative that allows people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to make phone calls just like anyone else. Using the NRS, they can talk to friends or family or make business calls over the phone.

From time to time NRS users may need to make an emergency call.

How does the NRS work?

The NRS is available 24 hours a day, every day and relays more than half a million calls each year throughout Australia.

The NRS uses specially trained call centre staff called relay officers who act as the central link between people with hearing and speech impairments, and the person or organisation they are ringing.

The relay officer converts voice to text or text to voice. Sometimes they convert between sign language and English.

Relay officers relay exactly what is said or typed by each party. They stay on the line throughout each call, but don't interfere with what is being said.

The NRS is bound by privacy legislation, and relay officers adhere to strict rules about the confidentiality of a caller's personal information.

Different types of NRS calls

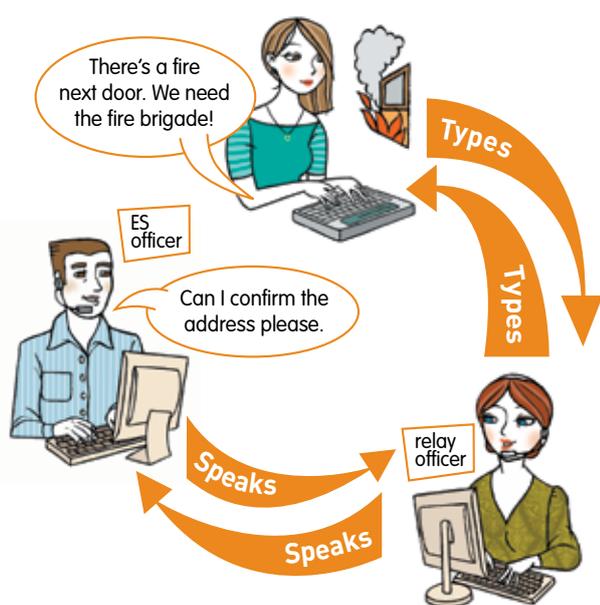
NRS users vary in the nature and degree of their impairment and how they manage their phone calls. Depending on their needs, they might use anything from an ordinary phone or mobile, a special phone called a TTY, another special phone that provides captions, a desktop computer or laptop, or a smartphone or tablet. NRS users might be speaking or typing, or signing in Auslan. But from your viewpoint as an Emergency Services operator, you will hear a voice on the other end of the call and you will listen and speak just as you would with any emergency call.

The main thing is to recognise a relay call when you receive one.

How does the NRS handle emergency calls?

The first time you receive a call through the NRS, the voice you hear won't necessarily be that of the person who has the emergency. It might appear a bit strange at first to have your conversation 'relayed' by a third person, but as the call progresses you will quickly get used to it. Most emergency calls receive queue priority over other NRS calls.

A typical emergency relay call



The NRS provides two ways for users to contact emergency services:

- by TTY through a special text-based service
- through Triple Zero (000), via the internet, SMS or ordinary phone.

106 TTY emergency service

The 106 TTY emergency service provides direct access for TTY users to fire, police and ambulance.

The person calls the NRS by dialling 106, the relay officer establishes whether the caller requires police, fire or ambulance and then contacts the appropriate emergency service.

The relay officer will say to you, *'This is the National Relay Service, Relay Officer [name], I have an emergency call to relay to you. Go ahead.'*

Triple Zero (000) relay calls

NRS users can also make emergency calls via the NRS through the internet, via SMS or by ordinary phone.

The relay officer will contact Triple Zero and say, *'This is the National Relay Service, Relay*

Officer [name], I have a call to relay to you from a caller who lives in [location] who wants [emergency service] please.'

If requested, the relay officer will give the Triple Zero operator the caller's phone number so the call can be transferred to the nearest appropriate emergency service. The relay officer will be transferred along with the caller.

Where necessary, the relay officer will say: *'Your caller is deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired. I will read to you what your caller types and type your response. Please speak directly to your caller and say 'go ahead' when you have finished. Go ahead please.'*

Working out your caller's location

In most cases the relay officer or caller will give you the address or location of the emergency.

Some callers using a smartphone or tablet may be able to provide location coordinates through the GPS on their device.

In cases where the caller may not be able to tell you where they are, the relay officer will help you as much as possible in establishing the caller's location and other details. They might also be able to provide you with the caller's name and phone number.

If a call drops out

If at any time the call drops out and you need to contact the caller by phone, ring the NRS duty desk on **07 3815 7632**.

For more information

Contact our **Helpdesk** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm Eastern Standard Time):

- Phone: **1800 555 660**
- Fax: **1800 555 690**
- email: helpdesk@relayservice.com.au

See our website www.relayservice.gov.au for a wide range of information about relay calls and the National Relay Service.

The National Relay Service is an Australian Government initiative funded by a levy on eligible telecommunications carriers.

Tips for managing the call

- speak directly to the NRS user, not the relay officer – use 'I' and 'you'
- only speak directly to the relay officer if you have a problem or question about the process
- if the relay officer is typing, speak slowly and pause at the end of each phrase or sentence
- repeat and spell difficult words, names, addresses and phone numbers
- say 'go ahead' after each response
- be patient – the call may take longer than a direct emergency call
- end your call with 'goodbye', or 'signing off'.



An Australian Government Initiative



A phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment
www.relayservice.gov.au