

# 112: the single European emergency number

***112 is a number that enables everyone to call emergency services anywhere in the European Union, from a fixed or a mobile phone.***

## Why 112?

As European citizens are increasingly travelling to other countries, for holidays, business or pleasure, there is a need for a single number, identical across the European Union (EU), to call in an emergency. Citizens, instead of having to remember several different numbers, now need only one, wherever they go.

**All EU countries are required to inform citizens (nationals and visitors) of the existence of 112 and the kinds of situations in which people should call it.**

## What happens when you call 112?

People calling 112 are connected to an operator. Depending on the national civil protection body, the operator will either deal with the request directly or transfer it to one of the emergency services (ambulance, fire brigade, police). In many cases, operators are able to answer in more than one language.

## What can people expect from 112?

EU Member States must ensure that any user of a fixed or a mobile phone is able to call 112 on their territory.

In addition, 112 calls must be appropriately answered and handled. In practice, this means that these calls should be treated in the same way as calls to other (national) emergency numbers. The quality of response to emergency calls should be the same, irrespective of whether 112 or a national number is used.

Emergency services need to know where a person is calling from. This is particularly important for calls from mobile phones, as the caller, especially in an emergency, may not know exactly where he or she is.

All EU countries are required to inform citizens (nationals and visitors) of the existence of 112 and the kinds of situations in which people should call it.

## ***Does 112 work everywhere in the EU ?***

***Yes. Commission surveys confirm that 112 is available in all 25 EU Member States.***

To encourage and help EU Member States to ensure that 112 works satisfactorily across the EU, the Commission is holding a pan-European stakeholder conference, exclusively dedicated to 112, on 11 October 2005.

This conference aims to help all EU countries to learn from each other, by exchanging their "best practices".

***For the first time, it will bring together authorities responsible for electronic communications and civil protection in all 25 EU Member States.***

## What still needs to be done?

Although EU Member States have made substantial progress in introducing 112 and making it work, improvements are still needed in the following areas:

- integrated emergency centres, bringing together all services (ambulance, fire brigade, police), are not yet commonplace, even though they have proved their efficiency;
- additional language capabilities of emergency centres/operators;
- hoax calls account for about 60% of calls to emergency services, and pose a threat to the efficiency of the whole emergency chain;
- additional investment is needed in some Member States to enable emergency centres to locate precisely where a person is calling from. This is critical to ensuring a rapid response by the emergency services;
- automatic emergency calls: by 2009, many cars will be able to alert the emergency services automatically in the event of a crash. But many Member States need to upgrade their electronic, infrastructure to enable the emergency services to receive and process the car's location report;
- information to citizens: although awareness of 112 has risen in the EU over the past few years, the Commission believes that there is still room for improvement.

### See Also:

- Fact sheet 48: eSafety

All Factsheets and more can be downloaded from "Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal", below.

## What next?

The Commission will continue to play an active role in promoting and publicising 112, and will take legal action if necessary.

Besides formal monitoring, the Commission is committed ensuring that 112 is well-known, and works well, across the EU.

An expert group of officials from the 25 Member States, will be set up after the 11 October conference to seek practical solutions to problems experienced at local, regional or national levels by the emergency services.

When the Commission is satisfied with progress made on the operation of 112 across the EU, it will launch a communication campaign targeted at the general public at large, to further improve knowledge of the single European emergency number.

### Further Information

- **Principal Website:**  
[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/activities/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/index_en.htm)
- **Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal:**  
[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/)
- **Information Society and Media Directorate-General:**  
Av. de Beaulieu 24, 1160 Brussels  
[info-desk@cec.eu.int](mailto:info-desk@cec.eu.int)  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/information\\_society/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/information_society/index_en.htm)