

United Kingdom: Emergencies

The Emergency Numbers in the UK are **999** or **112**.

The operator will ask which service; Ambulance, Fire, Police, Mountain Rescue or Coastguard; you require.

In the event of a member of your party being injured or becoming ill, request an **Ambulance**. Tell the operator any additional information that may help them get the best assistance to you. For example, the local Mountain Rescue or Coastguard services may additionally be required.

Ambulance services are staffed by highly trained paramedic teams. They provide on-the-spot emergency medical assistance and if necessary they will take the injured or ill person to the nearest emergency medical centre. In the UK, all major emergency medical centres will be signed as **Accident and Emergency (A&E)** or **Emergency Department**.

If you are transporting the injured party to hospital by car, look out for this road sign:



In rural areas, they may be a local **Walk-In centre** or **Minor Injuries Unit**, which are equipped to deal with non-life-threatening illnesses or injuries. If it is more serious, you will be transferred, usually by ambulance, to the nearest appropriate hospital. Walk in centres are also found in many large towns even where there is an emergency department. The idea is to take the pressure off both hospitals and General Practitioners. These tend to be well used by people who cannot get an appointment with their doctor for minor illnesses or because of a minor injury. No appointment is needed but be prepared to wait as clinical need can sometimes determine the order in which people are seen.

The **National Health Service (NHS)** provides ambulance and medical care, free at the point of contact. All **European Union citizens** visiting or residing in the UK are entitled to this level of treatment. You will be required, at some point, to provide evidence of your nationality or your EHIC, so as to avoid being charged.

Non-EU visitors and residents will be treated, regardless of ability to pay in an emergency, but the NHS is now aggressively pursuing outstanding bills from those not entitled to free care. It is therefore **essential** to have comprehensive travel insurance when travelling to the UK.

Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney)

Visitors from the UK to the Channel Islands need private health insurance. There is no longer a reciprocal health care arrangement between the UK and the Channel Islands. Also note that the Channel Islands are NOT part of the European Union.