

Emergency Call Systems

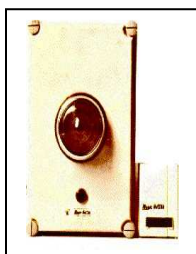
Emergency call systems operate in a variety of environments such as private homes, hospitals, nursing homes and retirement villages. They are designed to enable a person to summon assistance when needed. This is achieved by activating a personal alarm which is often carried on the person. Emergency call systems can give individuals and their family peace of mind that help is on its way, particularly if the person lives alone.

NON TELEPHONE BASED SYSTEMS

These are simple devices designed to alert neighbours or carers within close range that assistance is required. There are three main types: portable noisemakers, one way alerting devices such as alarms, and intercoms.



Portable noisemakers are portable hand held alarms that vary in loudness and range of the siren. They incorporate a variety of different features such as vibrating or visual alarms that can warn the wearer or the carer/ neighbour of problems. They are activated by the push of a button or the pulling of a pin. Some have a delay to account for accidental activation and may also be programmed to alert the user of smoke, or intruders. Bells and whistles may also be useful as low cost portable noisemakers.



One way alerts are alike to doorbells that the person carries while the carer remains near a receiver. They consist of a transmitter and a receiver unit which rely on radio transmission. They may be battery-operated, although the receiver unit is generally mains powered, so there is no extra wiring involved. The receiver can usually be moved from room to room in the house. The receiver may be fixed externally as an external alarm or strobe light so that it becomes a neighbour alerting device. These may be useful within group housing situations.



Intercoms and monitors include one-way intercom monitors, similar to those used to monitor a baby's room and two-way talk intercoms that may incorporate video surveillance systems for special circumstances. These can generally be moved from room to room, and use battery and mains power. Two-way talk intercoms usually require mains or cable connection.

TELEPHONE BASED EMERGENCY CALL SYSTEMS

These systems use the existing telephone line as the main communication link between a person at risk and support contacts. They can also be used in the vicinity of their home.

The person at risk wears a transmitter that when activated, sends a signal back to the base unit installed near the telephone to initiate an emergency response plan. Transmitters are waterproof and commonly worn around the neck or wrist. Telephone based emergency call systems can be non-monitored or monitored.





Non-Monitored Systems call a support person directly via the receiver unit. Pushing a button initiates the dialling of a list of contract telephone numbers in sequence until a response is obtained, then a pre-recorded alert sound or message is delivered. The Queensland Police Department, state that emergency services are unable to respond, unless another person, such as a neighbour family member or monitoring service, verifies the emergency.



Monitored Systems link directly to a 24 hour monitoring station staffed by trained personnel who are able to monitor the situation and communicate with the person while a personal emergency response plan is initiated and support people contacted. If the client and/or predetermined numbers cannot be reached, the call centre staff will contact Emergency Services.



Special monitoring units are also available. These can provide: auditory and visual signals, medication reminders, daily call facilities, smoke detectors, intruder alarms. They often have adaptations for people with limited hand control, hearing or vision. There are also fall sensors available, which sound a warning and then activate, if a person does not stand up within a given period of time. Installation of a Mode 3 or Mode 5 function to the specific telephone wall socket ensures the alarm system overrides any other activity on the telephone line. This means that when the alarm is activated the signal will go down the telephone line even if the phone is off the hook or in use.

When looking for monitored systems, consider set-up costs, ongoing monitoring costs, and whether to purchase or rent the unit.

Installation of a key safe outside the home may be useful for enabling authorised people to enter the home (eg. Emergency service officers, family and friends, other support coaches) particularly if the person at risk is unable to get to the door. Accessing this safe is via a PIN number.

ALTERNATIVE TELEPHONE-BASED OPTIONS

Support Organisations such as St John's Ambulance offer a free service whereby a person can receive daily or weekly calls from a volunteer to ensure that all is well. This service is also available in rural areas. Calls are made at a prearranged time. The service retains a list of support people in case the call is not answered. If support people are not able to be contacted and there are reasonable grounds for concern emergency services are contacted to investigate.

Telstra Call Delay Hotline Feature allows the user to dial a specific pre-programmed number automatically by lifting the receiver and waiting four seconds. This service requires a Telstra approved telephone and a local exchange that is compatible with easy call facilities.

Mobile Phones are now lightweight and easy to wear attached to belt or held in a pocket. Emergency support numbers can be programmed into the mobile phone.

Cordless Phones can be carried throughout the home, and may provide sufficient backup for the well elderly living alone. Some cordless phones also have an intercom facility. As with mobile phones, support contact number can be pre-programmed into the cordless phone.

NEED TO KNOW MORE?

Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec Queensland for further details.

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