

# Making the Most of the Ambulance Service

## ~ When do we need an ambulance? ~



### <Purpose of this document>

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of times ambulances get called out and the number of people being transported by ambulance. It is also taking longer for emergency crews to reach their destinations.

The fact is that around half the people transported by ambulance have minor conditions in which hospitalization is unnecessary.

Timely and appropriate use of ambulances is necessary to make effective use of the limited number of ambulances in the community and to ensure that ambulances arrive as quickly as possible to injured and ill persons with urgent symptoms.

For this reason, we have created this document entitled “Making the Most of the Ambulance Service – When do we Need an Ambulance?” The document contains information such as “Points to communicate when calling an ambulance”, “Conditions under which you should call an ambulance without delay” (since the patient may have a serious illness/injury), “How to call an ambulance” (instructions for when you actually have to do so) and other points, in order to help you decide whether a situation requires an ambulance or not in a confusing situation.

# Points to communicate when calling an ambulance

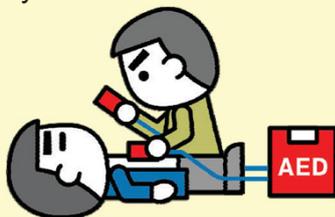
## Dial **119** to call an ambulance

**Emergency treatment** is important in order to save lives. If emergency treatment is required, the emergency call center staff receiving the 119 call may ask you to provide appropriate emergency treatment and instruct you over the telephone how to implement it.

It always takes some time for the ambulance to arrive.

Please learn the **correct way to implement these emergency treatment measures**.

They may save the life of a loved one.



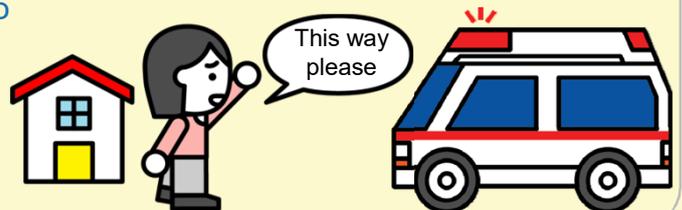
Your local fire department offers **classes in practicing emergency treatment measures**.

You can find the phone number on your town/city hall website.



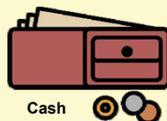
If there are other helpers available, send them out **to the place where the ambulance is due to arrive**.

This will help the crew reach you more quickly.



It is helpful if you can **prepare the following things** when calling an ambulance

- Passport
- Health insurance card/patient registration card
- Cash
- Shoes
- Current medication and schedule



Current medication and schedule

(For young children)

- Maternal/child health record
- Paper diapers
- Drinking bottle
- Towel

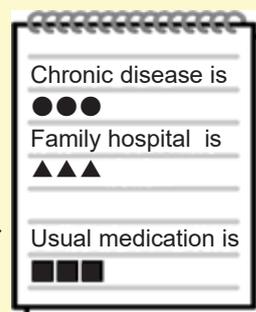


Drinking bottle

Towel

When the ambulance arrives, **communicate the following information**:

- The conditions under which the accident or illness occurred
- Any changes before the ambulance arrived
- Any emergency measures engaged in
- Information about the person who is sick or injured (chronic disease, family hospital and clinic, usual medicine, doctor's instruction, etc.).



\* It is useful to keep a note of chronic disease, family hospital and clinic, etc.

# If you experience any of these sudden symptoms, please call 119 without hesitation!!

## Face

- Half your face is difficult to move, or has pins and needles
- Your mouth or face is twisted when you smile
- You cannot speak properly
- Your sight is impaired
- Surroundings appear in double vision



## Elderly



## Head

- Sudden, strong headache
- Sudden high fever
- Suddenly lightheaded and unable to stand

## Chest and back

- Sudden sharp pain
- Sudden loss of breath or difficulty breathing
- Pain started after a trip
- Pain moving around your body

## Hands and Feet

- Sudden pins and needles
- Sudden loss of strength in one leg or arm

## Stomach

- Sudden sharp pain
- Vomiting blood

### Problems with consciousness

- Unconscious (no response) or incomplete consciousness (confused or vague)

### Spasm

- Continuous spasm

### Injury/burn

- Injury that includes significant blood loss
- Burns across a wide area



### Nausea

- Strong nausea accompanied by cold sweats

### Swallowing

- Object stuck in throat

### Accident

- Have been in a traffic accident or fallen, suffered strong impact from falling



◎Any other situation in which the patient's condition is altered or unusual.◎  
Note that elderly people may have difficulty in recognizing symptoms.

## When in doubt, consult the family doctor!

- \* If you have fever or other symptoms, call a Coronavirus Call Center or visit a fever outpatient clinic/family doctor/regional outpatient clinic or laboratory center as soon as possible.
- \* If you are unsure whether to call 119, contact your nearest emergency advice center (#7119, etc.).

# They may indicate a serious illness or injury.

## Adult

### Face

- Half your face is difficult to move, or has pins and needles
- Your mouth or face is twisted when you smile
- You cannot speak properly
- Your sight is impaired
- You suddenly have double vision
- Your face is a strange color



### Head

- Sudden, strong headache
- Sudden high fever
- You feel so unstable that you cannot stand without support

### Chest and back

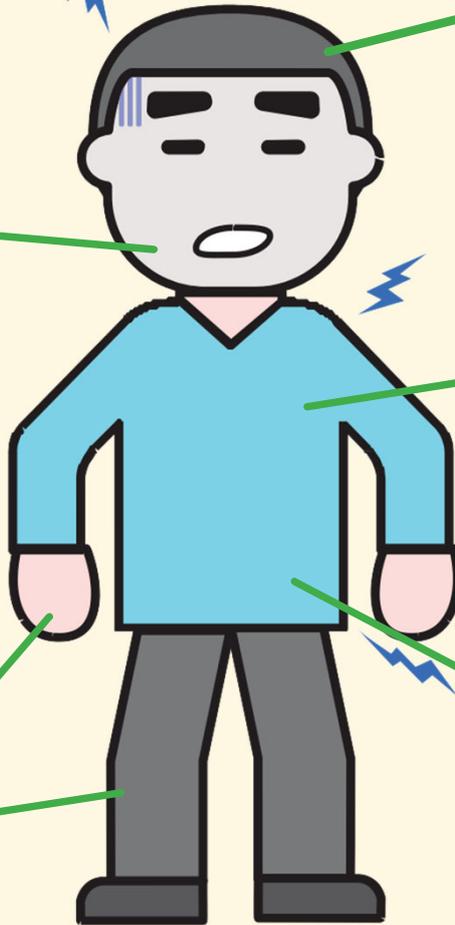
- Sudden sharp pain
- Sudden loss of breath or difficulty breathing
- A sense of tightness or pressure in the chest, lasting 2 or 3 minutes
- Pain moving around your body

### Stomach

- Sudden sharp pain
- Persistent strong stomach pain
- Vomiting blood
- Blood in feces or blackish feces

### Hands and Feet

- Sudden pins and needles
- Sudden loss of strength in one leg or arm



### Problems with consciousness

- Unconscious (no response) or incomplete consciousness (confused or vague)
- Sense of exhaustion

### Spasm

- Continuous spasm
- Spasm ends, but consciousness does not return

### Injury/burn

- Injury that includes significant blood loss
- Burns across a wide area



### Nausea

- Strong nausea accompanied by cold sweats

### Swallowing

- Patient has swallowed an object, has difficulty breathing, or is unconscious

### Accident

- Have been in a traffic accident (strong impact)
- Have been submerged in water
- Have fallen from a height

©Any other situation in which the patient's condition is altered or unusual.

\* If you have fever or other symptoms, call a Coronavirus Call Center and consult with them. (Especially for pregnant women and those with underlying medical conditions, if you have symptoms such as fever, call a Coronavirus Call Center or visit a fever outpatient clinic/family doctor/regional outpatient clinic or laboratory center as soon as possible.)

\* If you are unsure whether to call 119, contact your nearest emergency advice center (#7119, etc.).

# Situations in which you should call 119 without hesitation!

Child (up to the age of 15)

## Face

- Lips purple
- Facial color clearly poor

## Head

- Head hurts, spasm occurs
- Has hit head, accompanied by continuous blood loss, loss of consciousness or fitting

## Chest

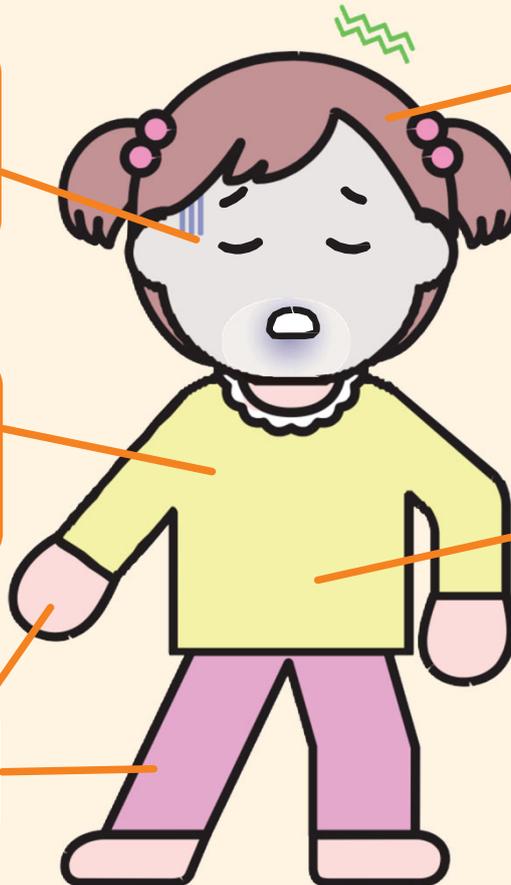
- Sharp coughing, wheezing, breathing difficulties
- Breathing weak

## Stomach

- Strong diarrhea or nausea, not eating or drinking, consciousness impaired
- Suffering from strong stomach pain
- Repeated nausea
- Blood in feces

## Hands and Feet

- Legs or arms rigid



### Problems with consciousness

- Unconscious (no response) or incomplete consciousness (confused or vague)

### Spasm

- Continuously spasm
- Spasm ends, but consciousness does not return

### Swallowing

- Patient has swallowed an object, has difficulty breathing, or is unconscious

### Hives

- Bitten by an insect, body covered in hives and facial color poor



### Burns

- Severely painful burn
- Burns over a wide area



### Accident

- Have been in a traffic accident (strong impact)
- Have been submerged in water
- Have fallen from a height



### Infants under 3-month-old

- Any situation in which baby's state is altered.

◎ Other unusual or strange behavior from the mother or father's point of view.

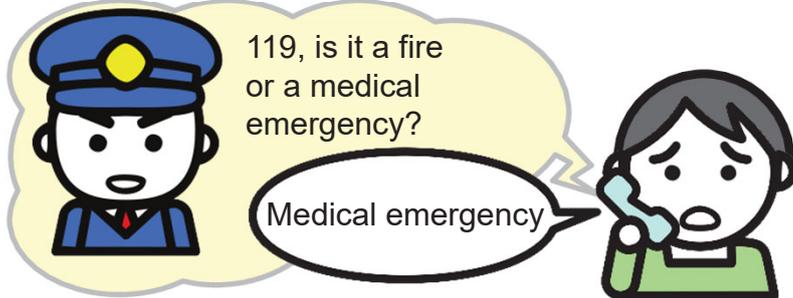
\* For children of elementary school age and younger who have symptoms such as fever, call a Coronavirus Call Center or visit a fever outpatient clinic/family doctor/regional outpatient clinic or laboratory center as soon as possible.

\* If you are in doubt, call your nearest telephone advice line. You can use #8000 for the Emergency Medical Telephone Advice for Children (mainly on holidays and at night) and #7119 for 119 calls.

## How to call an ambulance

On receiving a 119 call, emergency call center staff will ask certain questions to establish the need for an ambulance callout. If the situation is high-priority, the ambulance will be dispatched before all these questions have been asked.

**Please speak slowly and do not panic.**



### **1** Communicate the fact that it is a medical emergency.

If you call 119, the first thing you say should be "medical emergency".



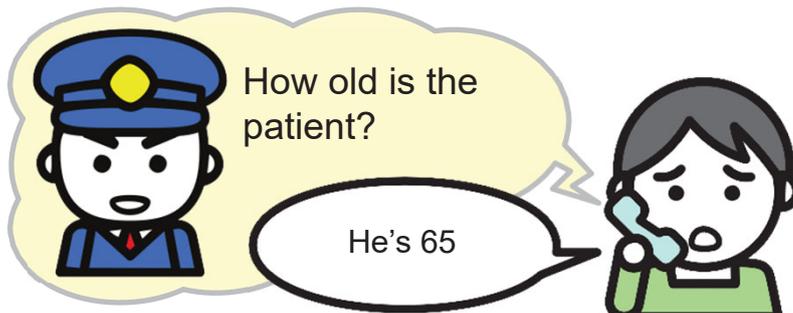
### **2** Give the address you want an ambulance to come to.

Please give the name of the city/town/village first. If you do not know the address, describe a nearby building or intersection.



### **3** Communicate the symptoms of the patient.

Firstly, state who has experienced what symptoms, and how they are now, clearly and simply. State what you know about their consciousness and breathing.



### **4** Communicate the age of the patient

State the patient's age. If you do not know it, give an approximation ("in his 60s").



### **5** Give your name and contact details

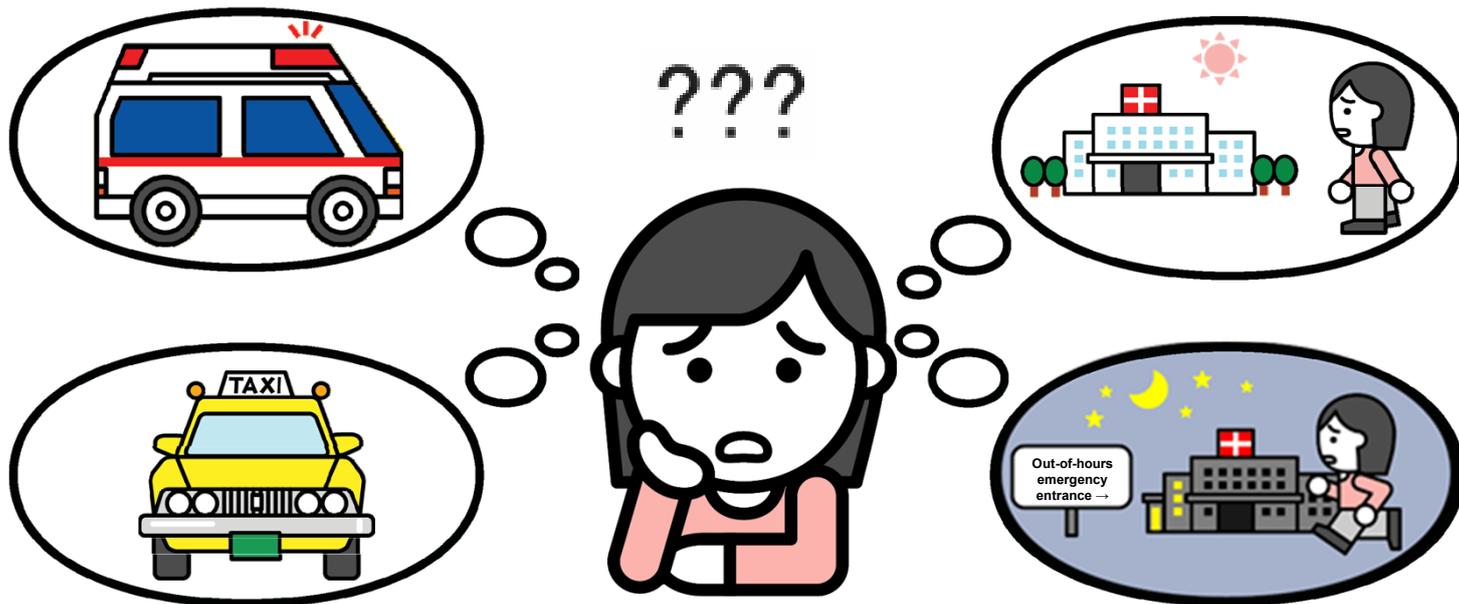
Give your name, and a phone number you can be reached on after the 119 call ends.

The crew may contact you if they cannot find your location, etc.

- In addition to this, call center staff may ask for more details, information about chronic disease, family hospital, etc. Please give whatever information you can.
- The examples given above are the general flow of a conversation in a situation of this type.

## If you are unsure, contact your nearest emergency advice center

If you become ill or injured suddenly, you may be unsure whether to call an ambulance, or go to hospital yourself. You may also be unsure which hospital would be most suitable.



Your local prefectural, city, town or village emergency advice center is there for just this kind of situation. **Please feel free to contact them.**

For example, the following telephone advice lines are available  
(as of October 2022).

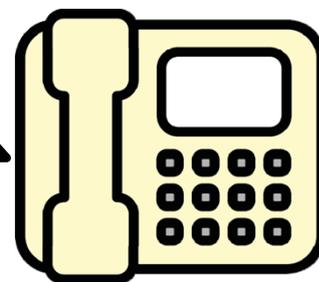
### #7119 Emergency Advice Center (Tokyo)

#### Emergency Peace of Mind Center

(Sapporo City area, Miyagi Prefecture, Ibaraki Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture, Yokohama City, Niigata Prefecture, Gifu City area, Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Kobe City area, Nara Prefecture, Tanabe City area, Tottori Prefecture, Hiroshima City area, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Tokushima Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture, Fukuoka Prefecture)

### #8000 Emergency Medical Telephone Advice for Children

(Available in all prefectures)



## Q-Suke, a nationwide emergency consultation app



- Created by the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, “Q-Suke” is an app that helps people who are unsure of when to go to the hospital or whether an ambulance is necessary in the event of a sudden illness or injury, by simply selecting the symptoms on the screen and responding according to the level of urgency.
- The app is **free** to download and use.



< Created in cooperation with Osaka University Hospital. (Patent No. 6347901) >

the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Fire and Disaster Management Agency “Q-Suke” information site

[https://www.fdma.go.jp/neuter/topics/filedList9\\_6/kyukyu\\_app.html](https://www.fdma.go.jp/neuter/topics/filedList9_6/kyukyu_app.html)

# Emergency medical inspection

Even if the symptoms are not urgent, some people call an ambulance simply because they have no transport, they do not know which hospital to go to, it is more convenient, or because they feel they are in trouble.

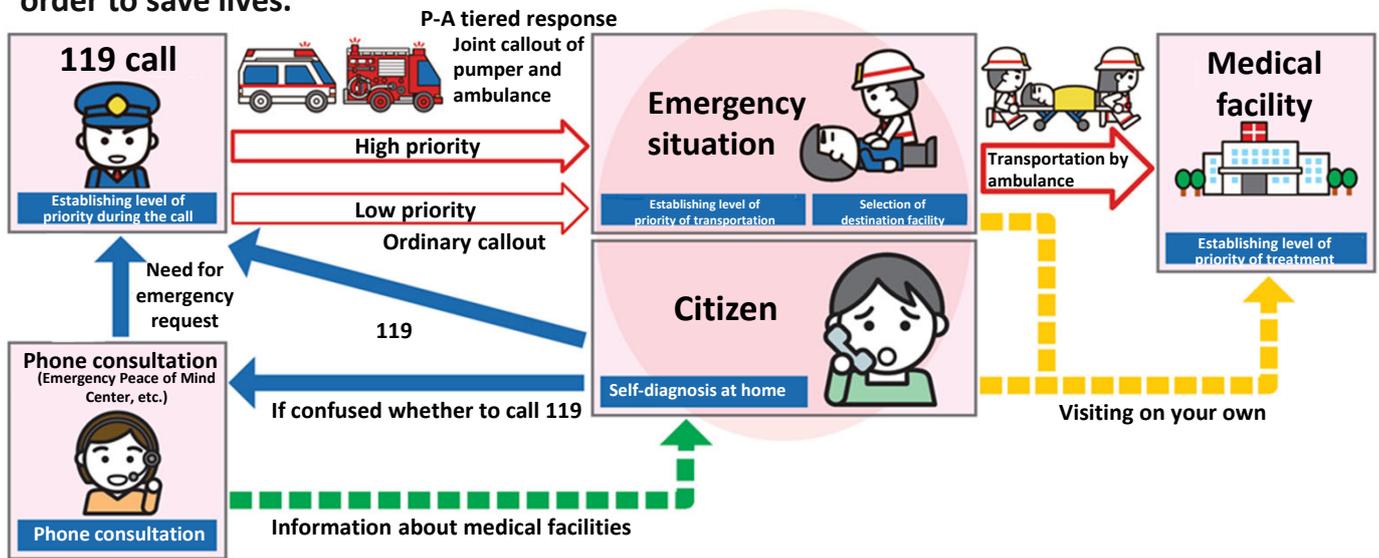
Sometimes people visit an out-of-hours emergency clinic at night or on a holiday because they cannot take time off during the week, they are busy during the day, or they have to go to work the next day.

Ambulances and emergency medical staff are a **limited resource**. Please think about whether you really need an emergency consultation, in order to ensure that the service is available to those who do.

## Ambulances have been called in these situations ~ Do you really need an ambulance? ~

- An itchy mosquito bite
- Sunburn after sea bathing, making the skin burn
- A paper cut on the finger, which has stopped bleeding...
- The medicine the patient received at hospital has run out
- Scheduled to go into hospital today, so wanted a lift...
- Had called a home helper who did not come, so called an ambulance...
- Didn't want to wait long at hospital, so called an ambulance

It is important to ensure that **emergency medics can be dispatched to emergency cases in order to save lives.**



Example of phone consultation



Example of establishing level of priority of transportation



Example of establishing level of priority during call



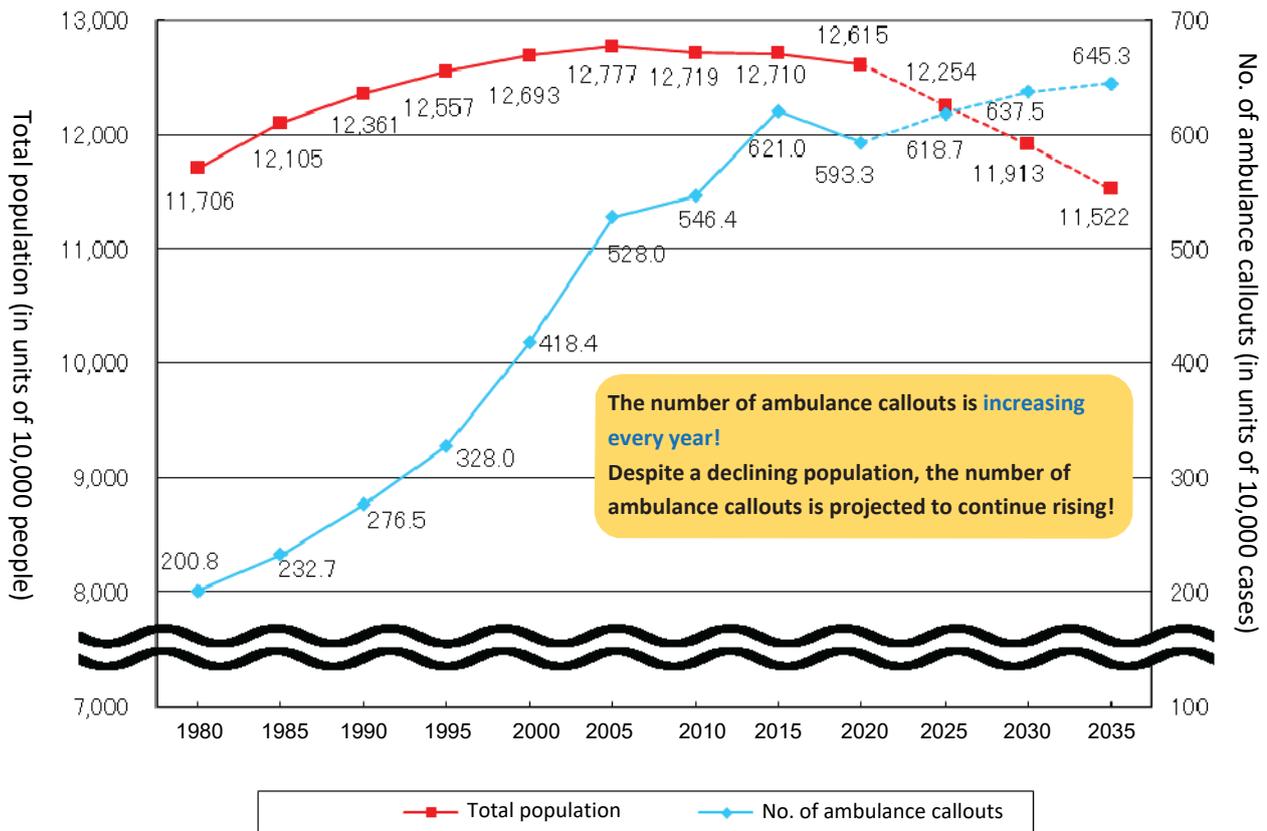
Example of establishing level of priority of treatment



The Fire and Disaster Management Agency uses these common **criteria for deciding on levels of priority** in order to create an efficient emergency response system.

# Reference: Current and future projections of ambulance callout

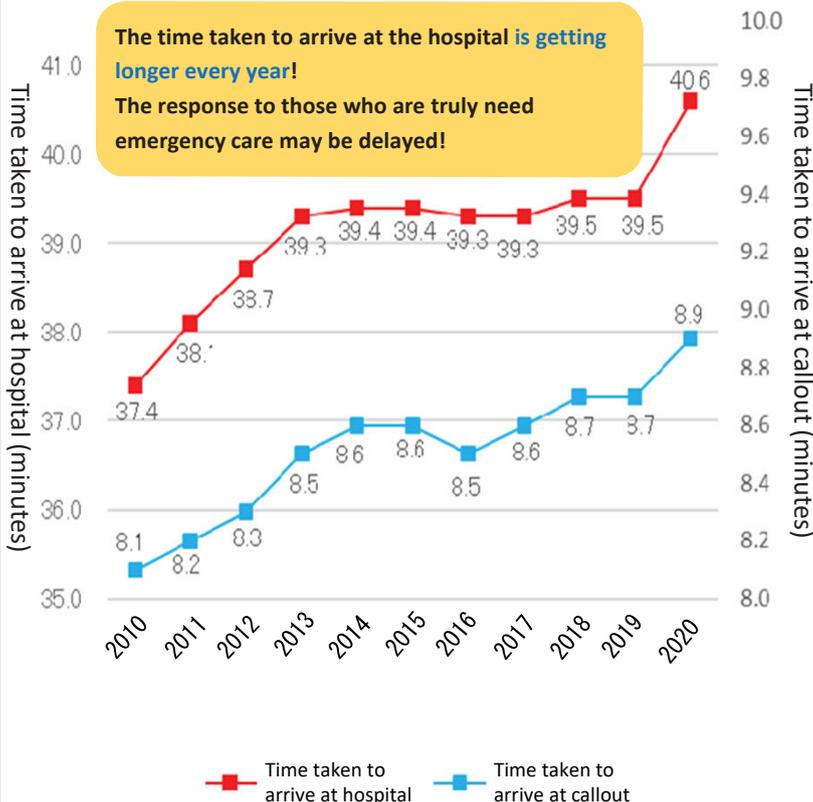
**Trends in ambulance callouts and total population** (Actual figures till 2020, projected figures for 2025 onwards)



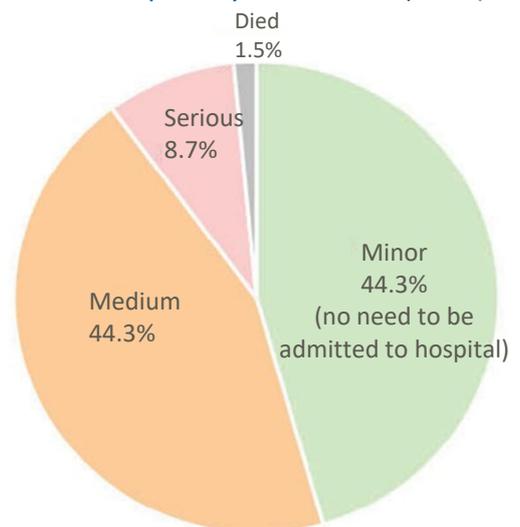
\*Projected population based on projections in "Future population projections for Japanese cities, towns and villages" (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

\*The number of callouts from 2025 onward has been estimated based national ambulance callout data and do not take into account future changes in rates of transportation or changes in social conditions.

**Trends in time taken to arrive at callout, and time taken to arrive at hospital**



**Comparison of levels of sickness/injury of patients taken to hospital by ambulance (2020)**



**Around 45% the people who are transported to hospitals by ambulance have minor conditions in which hospitalization is unnecessary!**  
**Some of these people may never have needed to use an ambulance in the first place.**