Calling emergency help at a large venue: information to have ready

In a large venue, calling for help includes making it possible for responders to reach the person. Staff should know the site address, useful entrance, internal location names and how to contact the event or duty lead. If a serious medical emergency is suspected, call 999 promptly and follow the call handler's instructions. Summon trained first-aid support through the venue arrangements.

UK general emergency-awareness microcourse. Scope is recognition, calling and handover; CPR, treatment skills and workplace first-aider qualification are excluded.

The practical principles

Recognise the need for urgent help

Collapse, severe breathing difficulty, suspected stroke, severe bleeding or a serious injury can require emergency assistance. A person's condition can change quickly. Check for danger to yourself and others before approaching. Summon the site first aider and call 999 for a life-threatening emergency. Waiting for a manager's permission should never delay an emergency call.

Make the call useful

Ask for the relevant emergency service and give the exact location, access point and callback number. Describe what happened and what you can observe, including whether the person responds and appears to be breathing normally. Answer the call handler's questions and follow their instructions. Put the phone on speaker if helpful and safe. Tell the handler if the person's condition or location changes.

Support the response

Send a colleague to guide responders and keep access clear. Stay with the person where safe, summon the trained first aider and preserve privacy. Pass on relevant information such as the time of collapse and known circumstances. This course teaches the communication and coordination around an emergency. Practical lifesaving skills require appropriate training; in a real emergency follow the dispatcher's immediate instructions.

Work through a shift scenario

Fictional exercise: a visitor collapses near a temporary stage. The caller gives the exact site and location, describes what they can observe and answers the call handler's questions. Another staff member, if available and directed, meets responders at the agreed access point. Someone keeps event control informed so the route can be managed. Avoid an uncoordinated situation where several people assume someone else has called.

Avoid the common failure

A vague location or locked entrance can delay assistance. Practise the location description before the event and check communication coverage. This guide covers recognition, calling and handover; practical treatment skills need suitable training. Do not move a person unnecessarily or attempt unfamiliar treatment in place of following emergency instructions.

A second situation to discuss

Fictional scenario: A guest collapses in an upstairs function room while the main reception is locked for the night.

Call 999, give the room and best access route, summon the first aider and send a colleague to open the agreed entrance and guide responders. Follow the call handler's instructions and update them if the guest's condition changes.

Use a working record

Record the specific arrangements below before the briefing. Keep the wording short enough for a colleague to use during the shift. Where a field does not apply, explain why; where information is missing, assign a person to resolve it. Store personal or sensitive details in the business's approved system.

- Exact address/location
- access point
- caller contact
- help called/time
- first aider
- responder guide
- handover

At the next handover, ask what changed, which action remains open and who now owns it. Close the record only when the agreed follow-up is complete. A recurring problem should inform the next briefing and the relevant operational procedure.

Check understanding

Before approaching, consider:

Danger to yourself and others Scene safety helps prevent further casualties.

A useful emergency call includes:

Exact location, condition and callback number Responders need accurate location and immediate facts.

Calling emergency services from a venue with three entrances

A guest collapses in a function room. One member of staff calls for emergency help while another says the street address covers an entire complex. What location details will help responders find the guest?

Compare your decision

Follow the venue's emergency procedure, call the emergency services promptly and follow the call handler's instructions. Give the address, room, floor, usable entrance and any access restriction you know. If staffing and safety allow, assign someone to meet responders.

Practise describing the route aloud from the entrance. Identify who will open a controlled door and who stays available to relay any change in the guest's condition.

Sources and scope

- Source: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-call-999/
- Source: https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/firstaid/first-aid-training.htm

Original workplace examples and suggested record. Prepared 19 October 2026. Use the current linked guidance and the venue's procedures for operational decisions.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details