

## Frequently Asked Questions

# 13STAR

13STAR (137827) is the new number which is now available for easy access to a number of services. This includes statewide urgent inter-hospital transfers from SA Ambulance Service, specialist advice and MedSTAR Emergency Medical Retrieval services.

Call this number to access MedSTAR, as well as special advice lines including cardiology, perinatal and obstetric, mental health and paediatric. 13STAR is not for non-urgent ambulance bookings (e.g. appointments and discharges). These bookings should continue to be made either by fax or online.

### What is 13STAR?

13STAR provides a single number via a menu system which allows health professionals to access state-wide specialist advice lines as well as the MedSTAR Emergency Medical Retrieval Service and the SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) urgent transfer booking system. It is designed to be used in urgent and emergency situations.

### How does it work?

After dialling 13STAR a voice menu allows callers to make a choice depending on the service/advice they need.

### Which choices are available?

- Option 1:** emergency retrieval and retrieval advice
- Option 2:** cardiology / chest pain advice
- Option 3:** perinatal and obstetric advice
- Option 4:** mental health advice
- Option 5:** paediatric advice
- Option 6:** urgent non-retrieval transport \*

*\* may also /alternatively require fax or online booking completion.*

### Where are the various options actually answered?

- Option 1:** retrieval requests and retrieval/emergency advice – answered by MedSTAR Communications in SAAS Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)
- Option 2:** ICarNet – answered by the ICarNet paging service – based in Queensland
- Option 3:** perinatal – answered by the

perinatal paging service – based at Women’s and Children’s Hospital (WCH)

**Option 4:** mental health – answered by the Mental Health Emergency Triage Liaison Service

**Option 5:** paediatric – answered by senior doctor at WCH

**Option 6:** urgent non-retrieval transport – answered by SAAS call taker in SAAS EOC

### If I know the choice I need, do I have to wait for the spoken menu to make a choice?

For technical reasons you must wait for the initial 13STAR call to go through. However as soon as the menu voice starts, if you know the option you want, you can press your choice immediately without waiting for the voice to go through the whole menu. So, for example, for urgent non-retrieval transport you could dial 13STAR and then press 6 as soon as the menu voice starts and you will get straight through to SAAS urgent medical bookings.

### Will more options become available in time?

It is likely other state-wide advice lines will be developed. It is expected that these will be made accessible via 13STAR as they are introduced.

### Can I still use the old numbers?

While these may be decommissioned eventually, there is no plan to remove any of the old numbers in the short term. It is



hoped people will begin to use 13STAR routinely but the old numbers will all still work for the time being.

### Why can't the options all be immediately answered by the appropriate consultant?

Some of the options (such as cardiology) require different specialists to be paged depending on 1: what other activity is occurring, 2: bed states in various metropolitan hospitals and 3: the geographical location of the patient. These calls currently go via a pager system. Calls to MedSTAR are triaged by an experienced Nurse Retrieval Coordinator (NRCs) who will then connect you to the appropriate consultant as required (see below).

### Who answers the MedSTAR calls?

MedSTAR calls are answered by a specially trained Nurse Retrieval Coordinator (NRC) who will take some basic details (including contact and some clinical details) and then pass these to the duty Medical Retrieval Consultant (MRC) (or paediatric or neonatal specialist if the patient is young). This consultant will then usually be placed in a conference with you. There should be no need to repeat most of the clinical information already given to the NRC. If all MedSTAR NRCs are busy then the call may be answered by someone else in the EOC (see below). These calls, as with all calls to the SAAS EOC, are taped to enable review.

### When don't I use 13STAR?

- > If you require an **urgent local ambulance** response you should use 000. When calling from a health care facility you could alternatively use the SAAS 1300 number which will identify you to SAAS as a health care professional.
- > If you require **non urgent transfer** you should use either the fax, online booking or the SAAS 1300 number depending on which is usual for your location (see below).
- > If you require **non emergency**

**specialist advice** you should ring the hospital / specialist of your choice.

### Do I still need to ring a receiving hospital if a patient is being retrieved?

In most cases the MedSTAR staff will be able to pass on information to the receiving hospital. The goal is to help free the referring staff to care for an acutely unwell patient by minimising the time on the phone and the number of calls. On some occasions, however, the clinical condition may warrant direct conversation between the hospital and the referring doctor. This can be facilitated by MedSTAR using the multi-party teleconference system.

### What if I need urgent advice in a clinical area not covered by the advice lines?

You can use *option 1* to speak with MedSTAR. For less urgent advice you could ring the hospital / specialist of your choice.

### What if I need both advice and transport?

In many cases it will be appropriate to speak to the advice line first as this discussion may influence the transport decision. In emergency cases it may be reasonable to speak to MedSTAR first to get a team activated as soon as possible. This should be the local health provider's decision.

### What if I ask for advice and then the decision is for transport or retrieval?

Occasionally it may be possible for the advice giver to transfer you to MedSTAR but in most cases the quickest option will be to redial 13STAR. In some cases the advice giver may be able to contact MedSTAR on your behalf.

### What if I make a mistake and press the wrong number?

The simplest thing to do is to redial.



### What if I don't know who I need?

If you have an emergency situation you can use *option 1* to speak with MedSTAR who will be able to advise or, if necessary, redirect you.

### What happens if all the MedSTAR NRCs are busy on the phone?

Calls will trip within the SAAS EOC and may be answered by a MedSTAR MRC or a SAAS coordinator or a SAAS call taker. They should always be answered.

### What about routine or non urgent transfers?

These should still be booked by the current local method (see below).

### What about RFDS transfers?

All non retrieval transfer bookings should be handled via the same method (see below). If the case is going to be done by fixed wing then an RFDS flight nurse will ring the referring hospital back to make their own clinical assessment.

### What is the preferred method for making non retrieval transport bookings?

This method currently varies from location to location. The three options in current use are online booking, fax booking, phone to SAAS booking line. Please continue to use your local system. The preferred option for the future will be online for all cases. Referring institutions are encouraged to consider changing to this method.

### How can we get the online booking service?

SAAS can help any hospital that wishes to be set up for the online booking service. For assistance with this, in the first instance please contact:

General Manager  
Central Patient Services  
SA Ambulance Service  
Government of South Australia  
P: (08) 8274 0541  
F: (08) 8357 9057

E: [SAASOnlineBookingsInfo@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:SAASOnlineBookingsInfo@health.sa.gov.au)

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## For more information

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[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au) (go to Health information> For clinicians> 13STAR)

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