

## Why do we need a Professional Ambulance Service?

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### **Maharjan D<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Nepal Ambulance Service

Nepal lacks pre-hospital emergency care system, victims of trauma or medical emergencies in Kathmandu are transported to hospital either by taxi or private vehicle, with no medical care en route. Since there is no three-digit emergency phone number, such as 999 in the UK or 911 in the US, many patients are not transported to hospital in time for meaningful medical intervention. Many patients suffer grievous complications or even die as a result. According to a study by Patan Hospital, of patients arriving at emergency rooms, only 10% arrive by ambulance while 54% arrive by taxi.

The consequences of being delivered to an emergency room by taxi or non professional ambulance are serious. In addition to increasing trauma many victims currently die en route to hospital because there is no professional medical help to staunch bleeding or clear breathing passage ways.

### **Economic Consequences of not having EMS**

Recent estimates from the Nepal Community Emergency Preparedness Group concluded that Nepal loses about 530,000 Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per year to injury. By projecting current trends, injuries are estimated to become the 3rd most common cause of DALY loss in Nepal by 2020, as compared to the 9th most common cause currently.<sup>1</sup> A functioning professional ambulance system can help reduce these losses to economic productivity.

### **About Nepal Ambulance Service**

The Nepal Ambulance Service (NAS) is a non-profit initiative dedicated to the establishment of an emergency medical response system (EMS) in the greater Kathmandu and Patan municipalities, later to be expanded nationwide. This system will provide rapid ambulance transport to hospitals along with life-saving medical care by trained emergency

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**FOR EMERGENCY CALL 102**

medical technicians (EMTs) for sick and injured people regardless of ability to pay. NAS aims to operate fully equipped and staffed ambulances via a central dispatch facility with radio communication between area hospitals and ambulances in order to ensure rapid transport and treatment for individual patients. NAS EMT's are graduated from Patan Academy Health Science (PAHS) with collaboration Stanford Emergency Medicine International (SEMI), Stanford University School of Medicine, USA.

**What does it consist of?**

- Toll-free phone number
  - Telephone/Dispatch Center to take calls and track response, and direct ambulances to appropriate hospitals
  - Radio dispatched and coordinated ambulances.
  - A professional EMT in each ambulance
  - Chain of Medical Command
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**REFERENCE:**

1. Managing the Injury Burden in Nepal. *Clinical Orthopedics and Related Research*. 2008, 466:2343-2349