

Silent Solutions

What to do if you need to call 999 but can't talk

There may come a time in everyone's life when you need to call the emergency services, but it might put you or those around you in even more danger by talking.

What are you supposed to do if making any noise at all might alert an attacker to your presence and so you need to remain silent?

When a person calls 999, an operator asks which service they require.

If they don't answer, they are prompted to tap the handset, cough, or make some other audible sound without speaking.

They are then given the option to press 55.

If there is no response to any of the prompts, the call is terminated.

If you press 55 the police will trace the call and respond.

It's a potentially life-saving function that has been used by the emergency services for the past 15 years, but very few people are aware of its existence.

It is hoped that by spreading awareness of the procedure, the emergency services will be able to act more efficiently and save lives.