



## Press release

### Raising the alarm in emergency situations via the National **SOS ALARM** App

Alert **SOS ALARM** Emergency Workers nearby and the 112 alarm station automatically

the Public and Companies help each other ... before seconds ... become minutes...

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From 2 July, everyone in the Netherlands can download for free the National SOS ALARM App (*Landelijke SOS ALARM App*) for Smartphones via the Apple or Google store and the website [helplevensredden.nl](http://helplevensredden.nl). Via the National SOS ALARM App, SOS ALARM Emergency Workers are also alerted, if they are in the neighbourhood. They will provide (first) aid until the police, fire brigade and/or ambulance have arrived.

*"Together, we can make the Netherlands and our neighbourhood even safer for our immediate families, families, neighbours and colleagues",* says Ambassador and former skating champion Hein Vergeer. The official emergency services have to deal with response times to the calamity. Depending on the location in the country, we are talking about an average of 10 – 15 minutes. For certain calamities, help on site is really needed sooner, for example in the case of a cardiac arrest, an arterial bleed, a fire with an evacuation or an accident. However, also in a non-life-threatening situation, we would want our loved ones to have help available while the emergency services are on their way.

**HELP – there is help nearby!** In the case of a calamity, it is usually a member of the public who is first present and who alerts the official emergency services via the 112 alarm station. In such situations, people often call out to ask whether there is anyone nearby who can provide assistance. HELP - Is there a doctor or an emergency worker nearby? The SOS ALARM support service has automated this principle so that emergency workers with the correct skills can be alerted, if they are nearby.

The people' initiative National SOS ALARM support service (*Landelijke SOS ALARM Hulpdienst*) is a non-profit organization which manages the National register of Dutch people with (first) aid skills. The SOS ALARM alert and provision of information services takes place via the National SOS ALARM App which can

be downloaded for free. The SOS ALARM emergency worker is alerted via a Smartphone on the basis of GPS and his or her skills.

**What can you do as a Dutch citizen?** Download the free SOS ALARM App onto your Smartphone and use this in an emergency situation. By means of this App, in an emergency situation, you automatically alert SOS ALARM Emergency workers, if they are located nearby, and after 4 seconds you will be automatically connected to the 112 alarm station. In this way, you as the caller and as the victim will receive help during the response times. The National SOS ALARM support service has posters available via its website which Dutch people can give to employees/volunteers of the police, fire brigade, ambulance and defence, first aid workers, in-house emergency response workers, CPR emergency workers or companies in the neighbourhood. In this way, Dutch people will help each other to increase the safety of their immediate family, family, neighbours and colleagues ... before seconds ... become minutes. Via the website [helplevensredden.nl](http://helplevensredden.nl), there is a clear National information film available about the method of work of the SOS ALARM support service.

**Together, bridging the response times of the police, fire brigade and ambulance.** *"In order to bridge jointly the response times of the official emergency services, a solution was sought so that the citizen can receive aid sooner in the case of a calamity and to thus also possibly save lives",* says Chairman of the Board Antoine Janssen. The SOS ALARM emergency workers include people who work in their spare time for the police, fire brigade, ambulance or defence, in-house emergency response workers and first aid workers.

How does the emergency worker know that a calamity is happening nearby, also outside of working hours? Dutch people with first aid skills were not registered anywhere, yet they are often willing to provide help! The National SOS ALARM support service manages the National database with Dutch people who have first aid skills. The 'participating society', as King Willem Alexander expressed this during the State Opening of Parliament 2013 – is active in the Netherlands via the National SOS ALARM support service.

**People & Companies help each other in an emergency situation -** so that response times are bridged, together, until the official emergency services have arrived. In the Netherlands, approximately 170,000 people work for official emergency services such as: the Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance or Defence. However, they could not be alerted about a calamity in their neighbourhood outside of working hours, because they were not registered.

There are approximately 400,000 Dutch people with a first aid certificate (EHBO) and 400,000 Dutch people with an in-house emergency response certificate (BHV). These people receive skills training on an annual basis and participants are once more certified as competent for, among other things, providing first aid, arranging evacuation in the case of a calamity (BHV) and being able to provide CPR. They can register for the National register of Dutch people with (first) aid skills. People who are registered can be alerted via GPS and receive information about the calamity via the National SOS ALARM App.

All organizations in the Netherlands can register as a Socially Responsible (Committed) Organization (MV(B)O) partner- Socially Responsible & Committed Organization, if they meet the conditions for, among other things, organizing emergency help externally, so that emergency help can be offered and received in the case of a calamity.

### **Simple way of raising the alarm via the National SOS ALARM App!**

*(Graphic explanation via the Infographic. You can place this next to the article)*

It is quick and simple to use the SOS ALARM App in an emergency situation. In the case of a calamity, accurate and fast information is very important for the emergency workers – for example, the location of the calamity, what type of calamity and the number of victims, if applicable. Via the SOS ALARM App, the caller can report this information within a few seconds.

The Smartphone detects via GPS where the caller is located, so the caller only has to report the type of calamity and the number of victims. *“A caller can also possibly send photos of the calamity, so that during the response times the official emergency workers, if registered on the National register, can view this information on their Smartphones and prepare themselves”,* says Chairman of the Board Janssen.

Via the SOS ALARM App, callers are automatically transferred to the 112 alarm station operators who complete the standard investigation procedure. During the course of this year, the SOS ALARM support centre expects to be able to transfer the details of the caller automatically to the 112 alarm station, so that essential information such as concerning the location, calamity and number of victims is immediately available and the alarm station can check this information by telephone. The aim is that the emergency services can be at the scene earlier. Thanks to the immediate availability of the information, the emergency services are expected to be able to reduce the response times, so that help can be given sooner at the calamity and to the victim and costs will be saved on a national scale. As well as the alarm for an emergency situation, there are various other alarm and information Apps available, such as missing persons, or ‘I’m OK’ (‘Ik ben OK’, letting family know the caller is OK in an emergency situation) via the National SOS ALARM App.

Stephan Wevers, Chairman of the Dutch fire brigade *Brandweer Nederland*: *“We are currently reorganizing our national alarm stations, changing from 25 stations to 10 stations with the latest technology. These new alarm stations will have to be finished before the system of the National SOS ALARM support centre foundation (Stichting Landelijke SOS ALARM Hulpdienst) can be connected to them. However, this will take a couple of years. I understand that the foundation is not waiting for that; sometimes you just have to go ahead with things. The sooner a member of the public in need can receive help, the better.”*

In 2015, approximately 150,000 emergency workers will have registered in the National register of Dutch people with (first) aid skills, via the National SOS ALARM support service. Before the National SOS ALARM support service went live, 18,000 Dutch people with (first) aid skills had already registered.

## **SOS ALARM in other countries**

As of next year, the plan is allow the SOS ALARM system – where citizens and companies help each other to bridge the response times until the official emergency services have arrived – to become active in several countries. As a result of this, in future years, Dutch people will also be able to receive help abroad.

Ida Haisma, Executive Director of The Hague Security Delta (HSD) said, *"The launch of the alarm system of the National SOS ALARM support centre foundation is a wonderful example of collaboration. It shows how a unique concept can grow to become a practical service to help us make our society even safer together. It also shows how the citizen can participate alongside public and private organizations. With the system, we can also enter the international market and showcase the Netherlands as the ideal centre for innovative safety solutions, while also offering Dutch people assistance while on holiday."*

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### **- Not for publication -**

The PR & Communications department can also be contacted by telephone outside office hours, via:

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*This number is for media contact.*

Customers, volunteers or relations of the National **SOS ALARM** support centre foundation can call:

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For journalists, there is [image material](#) available which may be used for publication, such as:

- National information film
- Logos
- Infographic **SOS ALARM** App

**National **SOS ALARM** support centre foundation**

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