

For a safer society

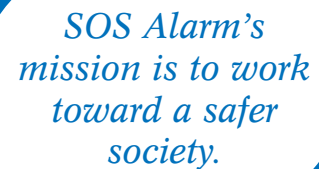


## Enhanced safety and security through SOS centres

SOS Alarm's mission is to work toward a safer society. The company is owned by the Government and the county councils and municipalities and is responsible for the single emergency number and for coordinated emergency services in Sweden.

An integrated SOS emergency services centre offers many advantages for increasing the safety and security of citizens in a region. For example, it means:

- a higher level of competence and strength to handle both major and minor incidents and emergency situations,
- greater chances of coordinating and prioritising efforts,
- improved possibilities for coordination between emergency, ambulance and police services and other rescue agencies, for example sea rescue, mountain rescue, air-sea rescue,
- better possibilities for using modern digital communication systems,
- better possibilities for using modern aids, for example technical support for decision-making, digital maps, satellite navigation and GSM positioning,
- greater chances of realising secure technical systems with more and varying auxiliary routes.



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society.*

All in all, a construction based on the SOS model means considerable cost reductions since the emergency centre is used more effectively than would have been the case had the equivalent resources been available from different sources.

## What does a SOS centre do?

Integrated SOS centres have been developed in Sweden over 30 years. Basically, the procedure is that SOS operators receive calls on the European emergency number 112. They interview the caller to clarify what has happened, identify the address and assess the need for help.

When interviewing the caller, a list of queries and a decision index are used as well as technical aids to obtain the address. The SOS operator sets priorities and alerts the ambulance and emergency services and at the same time calls police operational headquarters where a decision is taken on police action.

If needed, two operators can work side by side with the same emergency, a "joint call". One operator interviews the caller and advises him or her, whilst the other alerts the rescue and emergency services. In the event of major occurrences such as accidents, all forces are alerted simultaneously. If it is a case of special incidents, for example illness, normally only the ambulance service is alerted with one of the following priorities:

*One single 112 call puts all available emergency services at your disposal.*

1. Life threatening (blue lights)
2. Urgent although not life threatening
3. Ambulance matter that can wait, if not serious, for example, transport between hospitals

In the event of fire, the fire-brigade is alerted, usually in accordance with prepared stand by procedures.

The police contribution may be combined with the above or be a purely policing matter. The SOS centre collects the information, address, etc. and communicates them to the police. While help is on its way and before the forces have arrived, the SOS centre gives advice to the caller, for example on first aid. Contact is maintained with the forces who are on their way by means of radio, and information can also be communicated to vehicles via *mobitex*. If necessary, the SOS centre can connect up an interpreter to communicate advice from the Swedish Poisons Information Centre or the Telephone Advice Nursing service.

The SOS centre also cooperates with sea rescue, air-sea rescue and mountain rescue agencies according to special routines. In the event of serious occurrences such as major disasters, large-scale fires, floods, storms etc., the resources of the Swedish defence forces may also be involved. On the national level, a "Council 112" has been established. The purpose of this council is to function as a forum, exchanging experiences between the different partners who work with the emergency number.

Extensive work is currently in progress to improve civil preparedness, for example preparedness for storms, sabotage or acts of terror, in order to reduce society's vulnerability. In several regions, SOS centres are the headquarters for communication and control in connection with major events, and have fortified protection.

## Unique SOS Competence

In addition to services such as the single emergency number, alerting emergency services and directing ambulances, SOS Alarm also has opportunities to undertake other assignments. These concern related services in the form of

- security services
- on call services.

It is of central importance that the SOS centres have the right resources.

“Unique SOS competence” is based on:

- power of insight into the situation of the person seeking help,
- the ability to interview and analyse and take measures and also to use advanced technical aids,
- an ability to concentrate under heavy pressure.

*It is the people behind  
the technology that  
makes us unique.*

SOS centre operators are recruited following psychological tests which select those with a good simultaneous ability and good knowledge of civics as well as a high tolerance to stress.

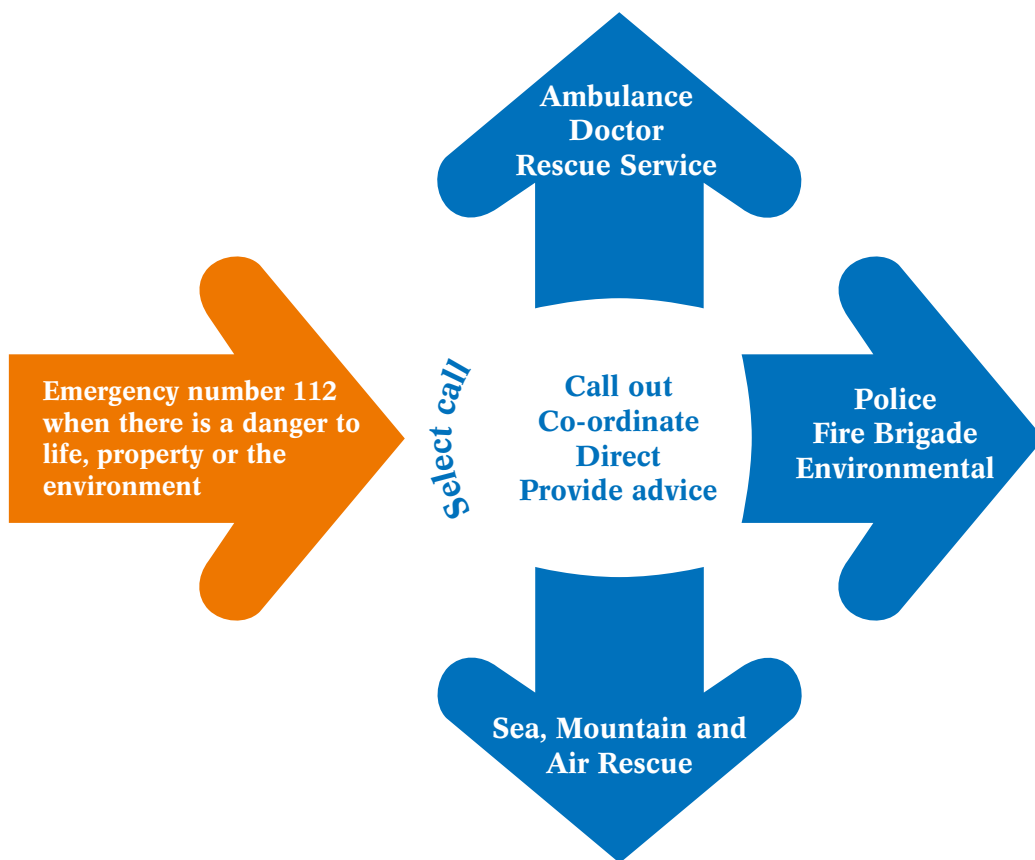
A skills development programme has been introduced with interactive training at a computer which makes the training less dependent on time and place. Experience of operations is continually gathered and included in skills development. In recent years, above all the level of medical competence has been raised at SOS centres through further training and by involving more nurses in activities.

To retain their SOS centre certificates, operators undergo a test every year. A medical test is carried out every other year. Advanced specialist competence may also be available at SOS centres, for example fire officers, doctors or whatever else is required.

### The general public and SOS centres

SOS centres have extensive contact with all citizens and are their “lifeline” in emergency situations. It is therefore of utmost importance that they have their confidence. SOS centres are among the organisations that are repeatedly shown to enjoy a high level of public confidence. Broad information about when to use SOS centres and how they operate must continually be given to different sections of the population, particularly in schools.

## Resources in an emergency situation



## Technology

There is a need to master advanced telecommunications, radio and IT technology at SOS centres. SOS centres in Sweden use customised basic technology for emergency situations called “Zenit”. It was developed by Ericsson for SOS Alarm. The system allows incoming signals by telephone, mobile phone, radio, text telephone (for the hearing-impaired) and all existing digital protocols.

There is extensive support for decision-making included in the technology to assist the operator, for example a medical index, emergency plans and address registers.

Operators register events in Zenit using a special code that enables evaluations to be made and statistics can be sent to cooperating partners. Furthermore, the matter is documented and kept for three months according to Swedish law.

Every SOS centre has a reserve centre to receive calls if its own technology is down. In addition, there is a manual reserve system at each SOS centre.

A comprehensive technology development programme is currently in progress to make the entire technical platform digital and to link up all SOS centres in a network. The possibility, in case of overload, to transfer the information to other areas, increases the ability to take care of major and lengthy incidents more efficiently. This will further enhance security. SOS Alarm’s ambition is to be “a hub of a digital world”.

*Communicating  
is what we should  
be best at.*

## Organisation and development

There are 18 SOS centres in Sweden. They are run by SOS Alarm, which is a company owned by the state (50%), and regional and local governments (25% each). SOS Alarm has approximately 850 employees and a turnover of SEK 700 million (about 80 MEURO). Each SOS centre is led by a local board made up of representatives of the region it serves. The largest SOS centre, which is situated in Stockholm, has about 110 employees and serves some 1.5 million inhabitants.

The majority of SOS centres have about 25 employees and serve a population base of some 300 000 inhabitants. At the largest SOS centres, 10-15 operators are normally on duty. At smaller centres there are 3-4 on duty in the daytime and at least two at night. Every year, SOS Alarm

receives about 3,5 million calls to the 112 emergency number. The integrated call centres contribute to a homogeneous handling of emergency situations all over the country; with the help of the decision index and standardised routines. These are especially important during major incidents. A long experience has made it possible for us, and all our partners, to develop a wide competence in the fields of rescue and health care.



*We create security  
in an emergency.*

### Security and quality

Security issues have high priority at SOS centres. They have a special Head of Security who is responsible for information, security, confidentiality (each SOS operator is bound to observe secrecy), IT security, etc. Each SOS centre has fortified protection and all technology is kept in protected locations. A quality assurance system operates at the SOS centres continually registering deviations which results in quality enhancing measures. The system is linked to ISO-9001.

### Current development projects

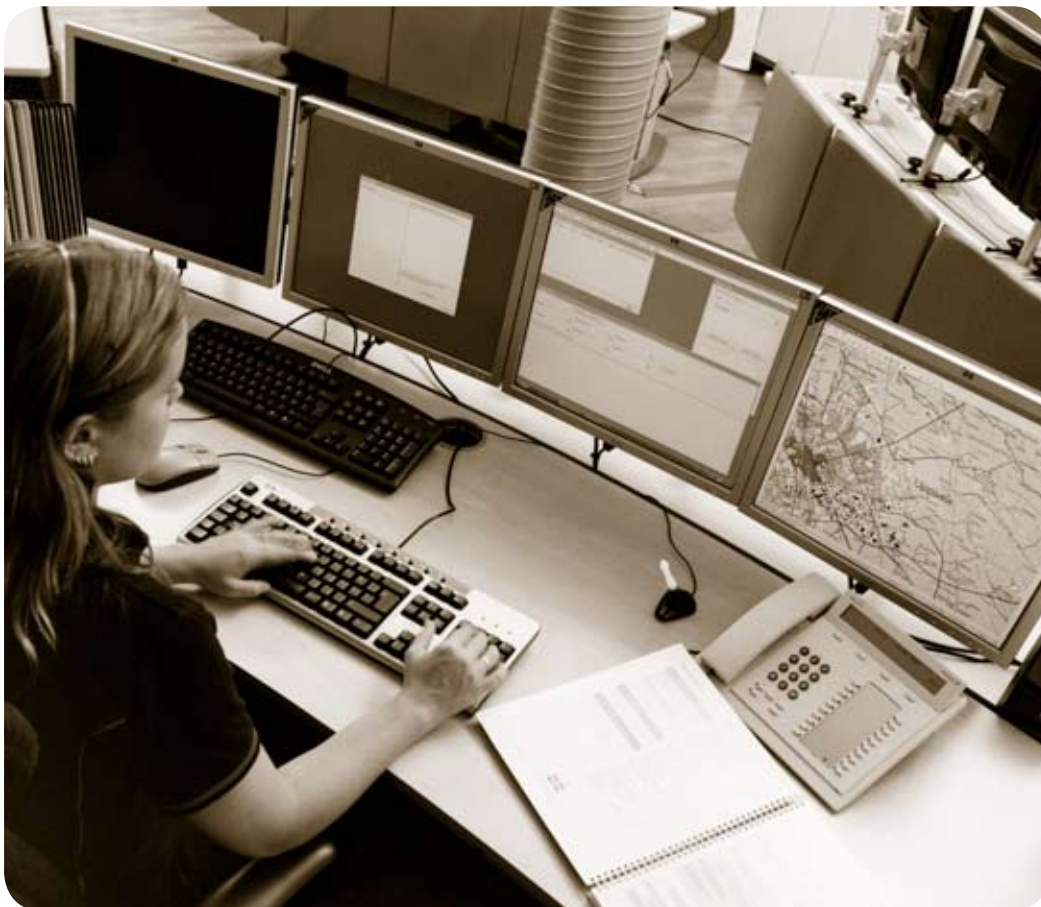
SOS Alarm carries on extensive development activities in which new services in the safety sphere are continually developed and quality is improved all the time.

Regarding the 112 emergency number, work is in progress to make it possible to locate mobile phones geographically and to analyse how IP telephony can be integrated in connection with reception of emergency calls.

Within emergency services, it primarily concerns shortening call out times by means of digital technology and increasing competence with the aid of special support for decision-making in the form of an index of emergency services. When major incidents occur in the community, SOS Alarm receives the alert first. Decision-making systematically takes place among the different rescue forces, reinforcing preparation for emergencies in the community. Developments in the ambulance service focus on a better ability to make priorities and

more effective use of ambulance resources. In security services it concerns reducing the proportion of unnecessary alerts by increased use of verification technology such as cameras and sensors. Regarding on call services, new services are developed with the aid of modern telecommunications technology and IT support.

Development work is carried on in cooperation with clients, cooperating partners and research and development organisations in accordance with a model for integrated business development which includes different aspects such as the market, competence, technology and production.



## SOS Alarm's international network

SOS Alarm has developed its activities mainly in Sweden. New techniques, increasing European cooperation, and globalisation, all mean that national borders have become less of importance regarding safety and security issues.

Over many years, SOS Alarm has built up an extensive international network, particularly with other European countries that work with integrated emergency service centres, such as Finland, Estonia and Iceland. In 2006, SOS Alarm was also commissioned specially by the Swedish government to handle co-operation within the EU regarding the European emergency number.

*Experience shared is experience doubled.*

SOS Alarm participates in international standardisation work in the telecom area within the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) in Nice. The company has also played an active role in European work on geographic positioning of mobile phones (Cegalis) and is taking part in two European relief projects in the transport area – “e-merge” and Eurowatch.

The operational cooperation increases in the vicinity of the borders with Denmark, Finland, Norway, and also Russia, within the framework of cooperation in the Barents region. This ensures limited resources are utilised to the utmost in daily work, and develops an efficient cooperation system in the event of major accidents or natural disasters.

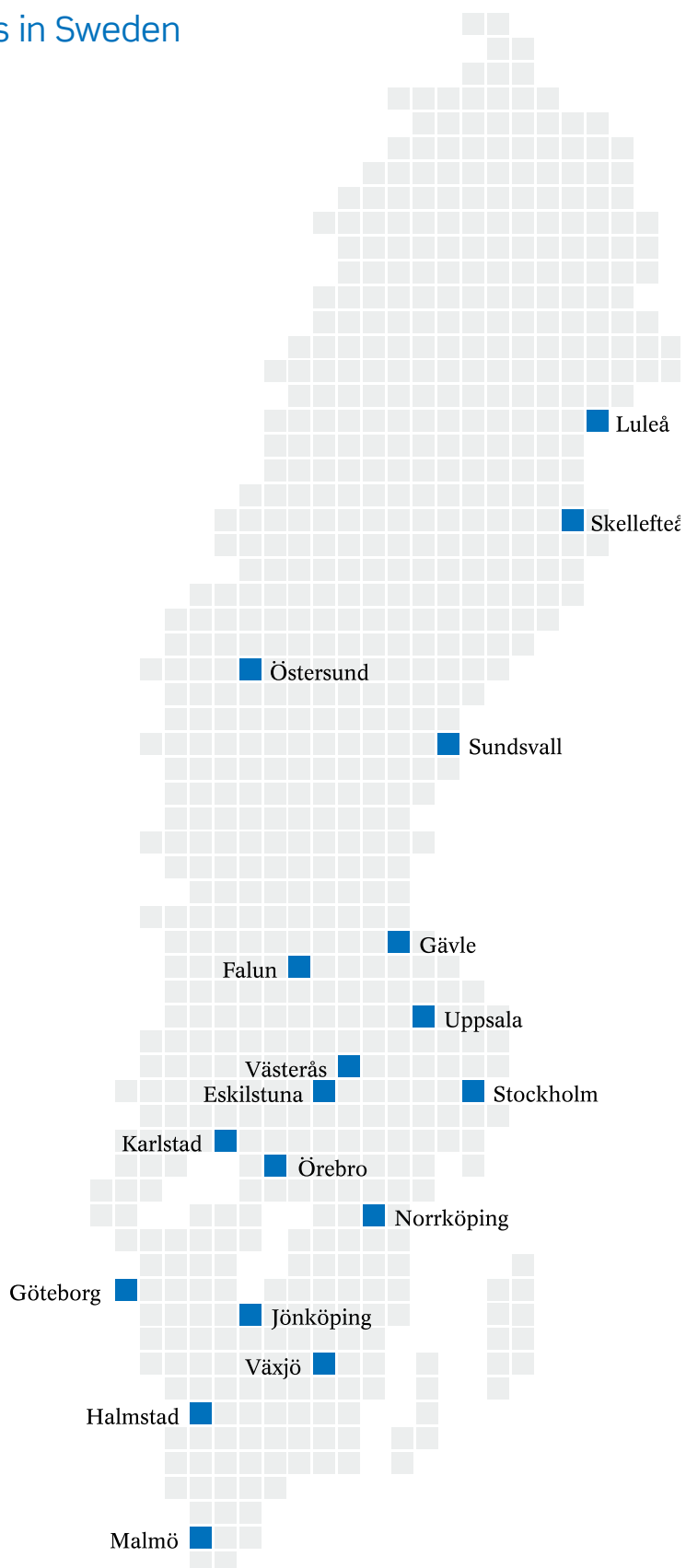
Similarly, SOS Alarm participates in comparison studies between EU member-states, regarding protection and security, for example in the ambulance field. The common emergency number within the EU can be an important basis for future cooperation, service development, operating methods and technique.

SOS Alarm operates within a wide field of responsibilities in both the public and the private sector. We are commissioned by the state to provide the emergency 112 service that is closely connected to the health and hospital sector, rescue services of local communities and the police. But the company has also close contact with the private security market, an area that we have a lot of experience in. This experience gives us the potential of working across administrative and commercial borders as well as across national borders.

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## SOS Alarms locations in Sweden



Using one single number it is possible in Sweden to reach all the emergency services available in the community. This takes place through SOS Alarm, which has been assigned the task of receiving calls using the common European emergency number 112. The company, which is owned by the government, county councils and municipal authorities, has been developed over a period of 30 years. Today, there are 18 integrated SOS emergency service centres throughout Sweden.



[www.sosalarm.se](http://www.sosalarm.se)