

After-hours phone message — recording script

Script for the practice answering machine outside opening hours. Use Script A as the default; Script B for systems with a recording-time limit; Script C for public holidays and special closures.

Recording notes (read before recording)

- Speak slowly and clearly. The most important information is the after-hours service number and the emergency direction (000) — repeat both.
- Pause briefly where indicated. Patients calling under stress need time to process numbers.
- Plain English, no jargon. Record in a quiet room with no background noise.
- Have this script in front of you. Do not try to memorise it.
- Test the recording by calling the practice from a mobile after hours and listening end to end.
- Re-record annually, or whenever the after-hours arrangements change.

Script A — standard after-hours message (default)

Approximate duration: 50–55 seconds at normal pace.

"Hello, and thank you for calling [PRACTICE NAME]." (pause)

"Our practice is currently closed."

"Our opening hours are [DAYS], [OPENING TIME] until [CLOSING TIME]; and [SATURDAY HOURS]. We are closed on Sundays and public holidays." (pause)

"If you have a medical concern that cannot wait until we reopen, you can access after-hours care through our partner service, [AFTER-HOURS SERVICE NAME]."

"[AFTER-HOURS SERVICE NAME] provides [bulk-billed home visits and telephone consultations] in the evenings, on weekends and on public holidays." (pause)

"To contact [AFTER-HOURS SERVICE NAME], please call: [NUMBER, READ DIGIT BY DIGIT]. That number again is: [NUMBER]." (pause)

"For free health advice from a registered nurse at any time, you can call Nurse-on-Call on: one three hundred, sixty, sixty, twenty-four." (pause)

"In a medical emergency, please call triple zero — zero, zero, zero — or attend the nearest emergency department. The nearest emergency department is [HOSPITAL NAME], [ADDRESS]." (pause)

"To leave a message for the practice, please call back during our opening hours, or visit our website at: [WEBSITE, READ OUT]." (pause)

"Thank you for calling [PRACTICE NAME]. We look forward to seeing you soon."

Script B — short version (recording-time limit)

Approximate duration: 25–30 seconds.

"Thank you for calling [PRACTICE NAME]. We're currently closed." (pause)

"For after-hours medical care, please call [AFTER-HOURS SERVICE NAME] on [NUMBER, READ DIGIT BY DIGIT]." (pause)

"In an emergency, call triple zero, or attend the nearest emergency department." (pause)

"Please call back during our normal opening hours, or visit our website at [WEBSITE]. Thank you."

Script C — public holiday / special closure

Update the date and re-record before each public holiday or extended closure. Approximate duration: 40–45 seconds.

"Hello, and thank you for calling [PRACTICE NAME]." (pause)

"Our practice is closed today for the [PUBLIC HOLIDAY NAME] public holiday."

"We will reopen on [DAY, DATE] at [TIME]." (pause)

"If you need medical care today, please contact [AFTER-HOURS SERVICE NAME] on [NUMBER]. They provide [home visits and telephone consultations]." (pause)

"For free health advice, call Nurse-on-Call on one three hundred, sixty, sixty, twenty-four." (pause)

"In a medical emergency, call triple zero, or attend the nearest emergency department — [HOSPITAL NAME], [ADDRESS]." (pause)

"Thank you for calling. We look forward to seeing you when we reopen."

Key numbers (for the person recording)

Your after-hours GP service	[NAME] · [NUMBER]
Nurse-on-Call (Victoria)	1300 60 60 24 — outside Victoria use healthdirect 1800 022 222
Emergency	000 (triple zero)
Nearest emergency department	[HOSPITAL] · [ADDRESS] · [PHONE]
Practice website	[WEBSITE]

Implementation

- Owner: Practice Manager. Recorded by a team member with a clear voice — ideally one regular patients recognise.
- Recording system: practice phone system, answering machine, or VoIP after-hours setting.
- Test after recording by calling from a mobile after hours.
- Re-record annually as part of the After Hours Care Policy review, or sooner if the after-hours provider changes.
- Public holiday variant (Script C): update and re-record at least 48 hours before each public holiday; revert to Script A afterwards.
- Cross-reference: After Hours Care Policy, Communication Policy. Record the version and review date in your document register.

Document control: Version ___ · Effective ___ · Owner: Practice Manager · Next review: ___ | Template by DocHelp · www.DocHelp.com.au