Our Performance
Queensland Health

Trauma and Illness

Emergency care
Performance

Emergency care performance

This page provides insights into the operational performance of Queensland hospital Emergency departments (ED), including indicators highlighting the timeliness of treatment from arrival through to admission or departure.

Ambulance transfer times

When an ambulance arrives at an ED carrying a patient in need of urgent care, the patient must be transferred from the ambulance to the ED clinical staff. The time taken to complete this transfer represents the patient off-stretcher time (POST). In Queensland, the statewide POST target is to transfer all Code 1 (emergency) and Code 2 (urgent) patients within 30 minutes of ambulance arrival.

At a glance

QAS performance

Detailed activity and performance information for QAS can be accessed on the QAS website (https://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au/about/performance-data/our-performance).

Quarterly data insights for the period April to June 2024:

PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS TRANSFERRED OFF-STRETCHER WITHIN 30 MINUTES (TOP 26 FACILITIES)	AVERAGE LOST MINUTES PER AMBULANCE (TOP 26 FACILITIES)	NUMBER OF PATIENTS TRANSFERRED OFF-STRETCHER WITHIN 30 MINUTES (TOP 26 FACILITIES)
55.3%	**14.6 minutes**	**80,662**
Compared with the same period last year ▲ 0.1pp	Compared with the same period last year ▼ -4.0 mins	Compared with the same period last year ▲ 1.0%

Annual data for the period ending FYTD June 2024

MEDIAN AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIME FOR HIGHEST CRITICALITY (CODE 1A)

8.5 minutes

Compared with the same period last year ▶ -0.1 mins

Patient off-stretcher times (POST)

The timely transfer of patients off-stretcher into the ED is essential to enable Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to respond to the needs of people in the community. The percentage of patients who were successfully transferred off-stretcher in under 30 minutes (POST) is reported for both the 'Top 26 Facilities' (i.e. Queensland's 26 largest reporting hospitals), and the total of all facilities across the state.

Lost minutes

In some situations, additional time is needed to transfer a patient from a QAS ambulance into the care of hospital ED clinical staff.

Each minute that exceeds the recommended 30-minute POST target is considered a 'lost minute'. Measuring lost minutes is not a formal performance measure but does provide operational insight into the efficiency and capacity of both ambulance services and hospital EDs. Queensland Health considers the average number of lost minutes per Code 1 (emergency) and Code 2 (urgent) ambulance.

The lost minutes is reported for both the 'Top 26 Facilities' (i.e. Queensland's 26 largest reporting hospitals), and the total of all facilities across the state.

Waiting times at the Emergency department

When a patient arrives at a Queensland hospital Emergency department (ED) for treatment, a qualified triage nurse assesses how urgent their condition is and assigns a category according to the Australasian Triage Scale, set by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM). The triage system ensures people most in need of care are seen and treated with priority, and within the shortest timeframe.

Hospitals measure the performance of treatment timeliness by capturing the percentage of patients at an ED who were treated within the clinically recommended time for their assigned triage category. A higher percentage of patients seen within the clinically recommended times indicates a higher level of performance by the hospital.

Unexpected departures from the Emergency department

In some instances, patients choose to not wait for treatment to commence. For patients in less urgent triage categories, this might occur if a patient feels they no longer require treatment, or if the wait time is longer than they expect. In other instances, patients may decide to leave the hospital after their clinical care has commenced but before their care has been completed, often against medical advice.

Total length of stay (LOS)

Extended stays in the Emergency department (ED) may cause ongoing bottlenecks in other parts of the hospital and can risk patient safety. As part of the National Health Reform Agreement, Queensland Health is committed to reducing the length of time that patients stay in the ED.

The 'length of stay' in the ED refers to the time between a patient's arrival and departure. Patient departure refers to discharge from hospital, admission into hospital for further care, or other, such as a transfer or departure against medical advice. Hospitals measure the proportion of patients whose length of stay in the ED is within 4 hours. This is reported per the National Emergency Access Target (NEAT). A higher percentage of care completion within 4 hours indicates a higher level of performance by the hospital.

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View more emergency care data

(https://www.performance.health.qld.gov.au/statewide-performance/trauma-and-illness/emergency-care-activity)
Activity
To see information about how busy Queensland hospital Emergency departments (ED) are, and other activity measures.

(https://www.performance.health.qld.gov.au/statewide-performance/trauma-and-illness/emergency-care-outcomes)
Outcomes
To see information on the outcome of the emergency care service provided at hospital Emergency departments (ED), including the number of patients who were admitted to hospital following their ED visit.

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