



Issue 1 – October 2025

The GoodSAM responders' bulletin

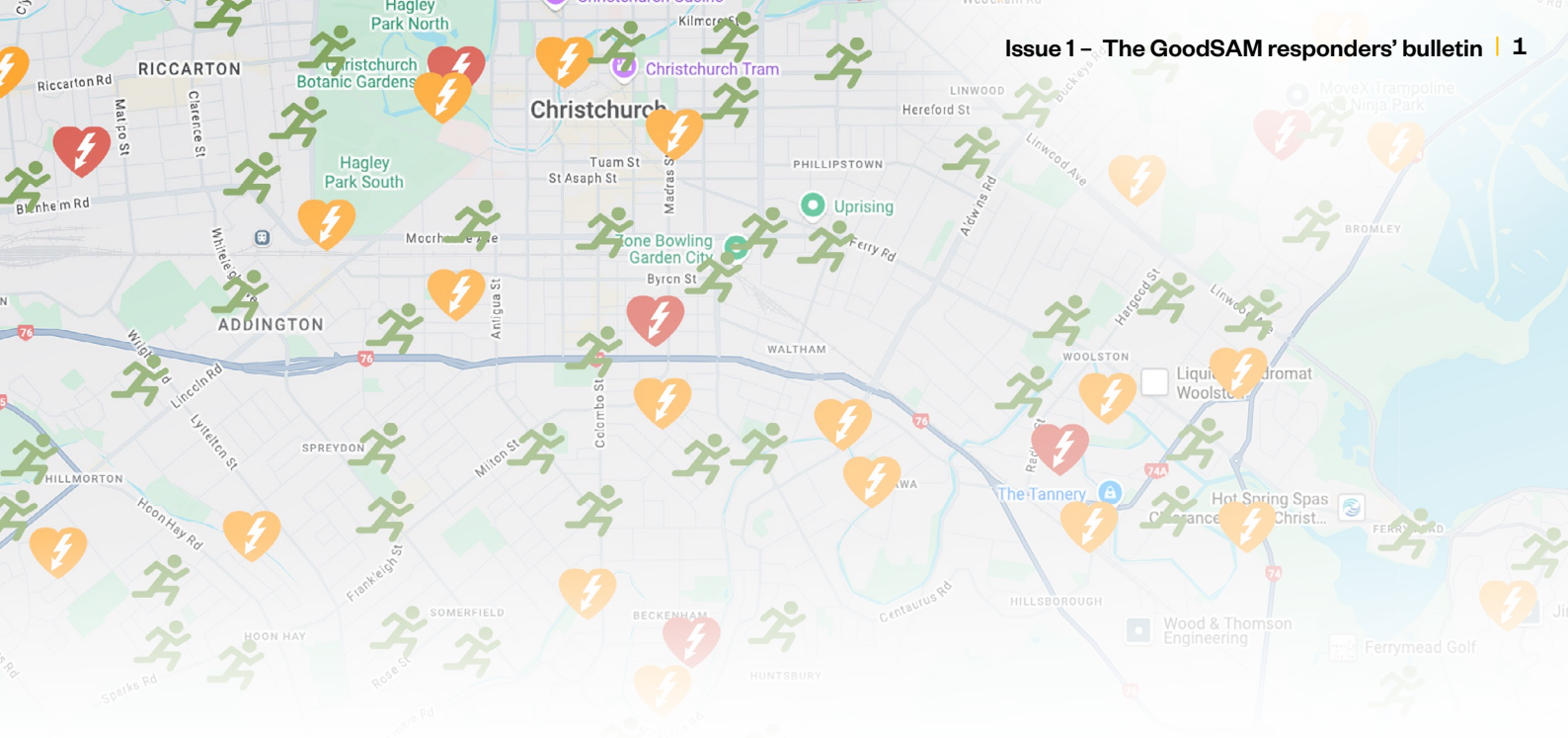
First on scene



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Welcome to the GoodSAM community!

Whether you're already an active responder or considering joining, this guide is tailored to you.

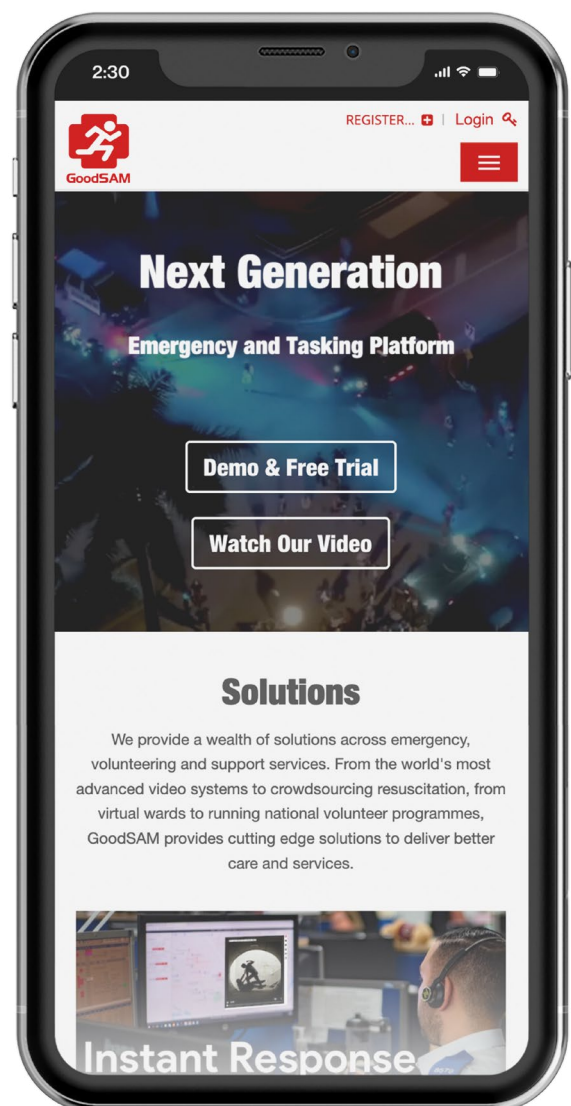
GoodSAM responders are at the heart of our mission to save lives through rapid assistance and innovative technology.

What is GoodSAM?

GoodSAM (Good Smartphone Activated Medics) is a platform designed to empower individuals like you, to make a difference in critical moments. Operating in Aotearoa and worldwide, GoodSAM alerts responders to suspected cardiac arrests nearby, enabling life-saving actions to be initiated before emergency services arrive.

Launched in 2013, GoodSAM now boasts a global community of over one million volunteers. Every three minutes, a responder somewhere in the world is called upon to assist in a cardiac arrest scenario.

GoodSAM doesn't just stop at alerts. The platform includes GoodSAM Instant On Scene, a video service utilised by ambulance service Paramedics. This feature enables real-time video connections with responders at the scene, facilitating secondary triage and clinical advice - a powerful tool for assessing injuries and guiding care. This isn't currently utilised for GoodSAM responders in New Zealand but is something we're investigating.



How Does GoodSAM Work?

When a suspected cardiac arrest call is received and identified by our ambulance communications centre, the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system automatically sends the incident to the GoodSAM server.

In New Zealand, the system has been enhanced to notify the six closest responders within:

- › 1,000 meters in urban areas
- › 5,000 meters in rural areas

You'll have one minute to accept or decline the alert before it's passed to the next responder. The increased pool of responders ensures the highest chance of timely assistance.

However, not all emergencies trigger GoodSAM alerts. Complex scenarios, such as hangings or motor vehicle accidents, and safety concerns may exclude certain incidents to ensure responder safety. Alerts will not be sent for incidents involving known or suspected significant risks.

Who can be a GoodSAM responder?

GoodSAM responders come from all walks of life:

- › Emergency physicians
- › Healthcare professionals
- › Members of the public with first aid knowledge

Simplicity is key. The criteria to join GoodSAM remain straightforward to encourage inclusivity and accessibility. This approach recognises that not all communities have equal access to advanced training but enables anyone with the skills and willingness to help to register as a responder.

In Aotearoa, **16,969** responders are part of GoodSAM, with **2,215** members affiliated with Hato Hone St John. By joining, you're contributing to a diverse and committed network united by the goal of saving lives.

Your role as a responder

When you're first to arrive at a scene, your primary role is to initiate early CPR and defibrillation (if an AED is available) while awaiting emergency services. Upon their arrival, you're encouraged to hand over the situation but remain available to provide further assistance if required or participate in debriefing.

Here are some tips to enhance your experience as a GoodSAM responder:

- › **Identify Yourself:** Emergency services may ask if you are a GoodSAM responder. Be ready to share your role and expertise.
- › **Provide a handover:** Emergency services may ask what information you have gathered and what support you have provided for the patient since arriving on scene.
- › **Engage in Debriefs:** Discussing your experience with emergency services can be invaluable, especially if this is one of your first cardiac arrest responses.
- › **Utilise Support:** Should you require emotional or professional support, the GoodSAM app provides welfare functions after responding to an incident. You can also reach out via email at goodsam@stjohn.org.nz.
- › **Feel Appreciated:** These incidents are often complex and require high levels of focus from the emergency service responders, who may not always have time or capacity to debrief or properly thank you. Remember, your contribution is recognised, valued and truly makes a difference.

Why GoodSAM matters

GoodSAM is transforming emergency response for the approximately **2,000 cardiac arrests** in Aotearoa each year where resuscitation is attempted. By alerting and activating responders, GoodSAM bridges the gap between the incident occurring and when emergency services locate. Ensuring the patient is provided with the best chance of a positive outcome.

Recent updates to broaden responder notifications underscore our commitment to improving survival rates through faster, more effective interventions. Together, this community - healthcare professionals and everyday citizens alike - ensures that more lives are saved.

FAQ's

Why did I receive an alert far outside my selected response radius?

There are several reasons that this may have occurred. Firstly, the app will update your location periodically using several methods including GPS, WIFI location and cell tower location. The frequency and accuracy of these updates can be altered from within the app using the "Adjust your location accuracy" slider. This means that you may be alerted to an incident in a location you were recently located or travelled through. Moving this slider to the right will increase your accuracy but will impact your devices' battery life.

There are also some instances where the app will alert you to a faraway incident (20+ km's) in a location that your device hasn't travelled through. We have some examples that our tech experts are working to resolve, but if this happens to you, then please take a screenshot of the alert and send it through to goodsam@stjohn.org.nz

I was stood down from an alert – Why?

There are several reasons why your alert was dropped. This could have been due to gathering more information from the scene that indicates a potentially unsafe situation, that the patient condition does not require CPR/AED or that there were other extenuating circumstances that require a different pathway of care.

Your alert may have been dropped due to emergency services arriving on the scene quicker than anticipated and no longer requiring assistance from a GoodSAM Responder. Whatever the reason, it's always important to stop responding if you're stood down.

We appreciate your passion and commitment to helping save lives in your community and look forward to working with you at your next alert.

Is it possible to get more information about an incident I'm responding to?

As the GoodSAM alerts are automated and sent early in the 111-call taking process, we often have incomplete or unreliable information that is of no benefit to the responder. We must also be careful about what information we choose to automatically send through as this may breach the patients' rights under the Privacy Act 2020 and Health Information Privacy Code 2020. This is why we have chosen not to include any additional information to the alert.

I received an alert but I'm "Off Duty".

In New Zealand, we have opted for alerts to be sent to any GoodSAM Responder, regardless of the "On Duty" status. Meaning you'll be alerted in the same way regardless of how you have this option set.

If you are unable to respond to the alert due to illness & sickness, at work, childcare commitments or have consumed alcohol – please tap on the "Decline" button. This way, the alert will disappear and ping the next closest GoodSAM Responder to the emergency.

I responded to an address, but found it was a block of flats or businesses. How do I know exactly where to go?

This challenge, often seen in urban areas, is something we're working to resolve as the flat or unit number doesn't presently get sent through to the app. So, watch this space as we work to resolve this issue.

If I'm concerned about the safety of a scene, do I have to proceed?

No, your safety is paramount. If you arrive at a location and have any concerns about safety, do not enter. The first step in any response should be a dynamic risk assessment—quickly evaluate the surroundings and determine if it is safe to proceed. If you feel unsafe for any reason, step back and notify emergency services, either by calling 111 or informing them directly if they arrive on scene. You are never obligated to put yourself in harm's way.

