

Guide for emergency call takers

How what3words helps locate callers and save time

Use this leaflet to help your call takers respond to a what3words address shared by an emergency caller.

[///frantically.appoints.visa](https://frantically.appoints.visa)

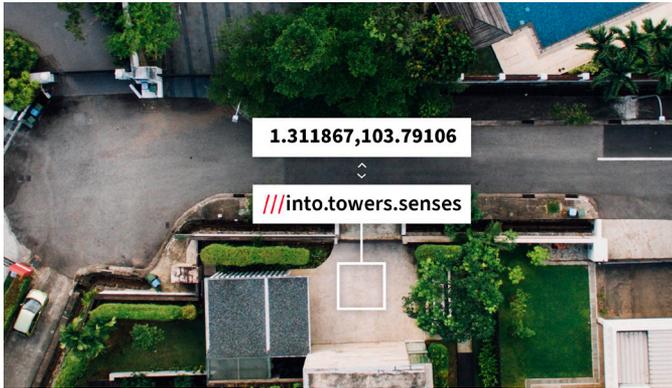
 what3words



Use what3words alongside other location-sharing methods in your emergency toolbox, and in line with standard location verification checks, to locate callers and save time.

How does it work?

what3words has divided the world into 10 feet squares and given each square a unique identifier made of 3 random words: a what3words address. what3words can be used to describe precise locations when traditional address information is insufficient or not available.



Benefits

-  Free app and online map
-  Accurate to 10ft x 10ft
-  Accurately converts back to coordinates
-  Works offline
-  Easily spoken over the phone or radio
-  Autosuggest feature helps verify what3words addresses

Who uses what3words?



The public

People use what3words every day to meet up easily and share exact locations like delivery spots and viewpoints.



Businesses

Companies are adding what3words to their apps, software and platforms across a range of industries, from logistics tools to in-car navigation systems, to improve efficiency and user experience.



Emergency services

Emergency services in the UK, US, Canada, Australia and Europe, including coastguards and Search and Rescue, have adopted what3words as an additional tool to use alongside existing methods of validating caller locations.

Overview

- Step 1** Retrieve a what3words address
Caller **has** the what3words app
Caller **doesn't have** the what3words app
- Step 2** Searching and Verifying
a what3words address
- Step 3** Share and dispatch
- Step 4** How to convert a what3words
address to coordinates

Step 1: Retrieve a what3words address Caller has the what3words app

1. Ask the caller to open the app.
2. Ask them to wait until the blue dot on the map has stopped moving/the three words are not changing.
3. Ask them to press the location icon (📍 on iPhone or 📍 on Android) in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.
4. Ask the caller to read out the what3words address for their current location.



Things to consider

Always ask the caller to press the location icon – the what3words app can open on a previous location and it ensures their phone's GPS locks onto their current location.

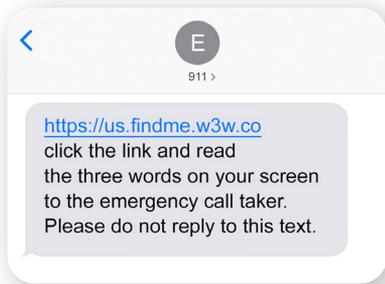


Step 1:

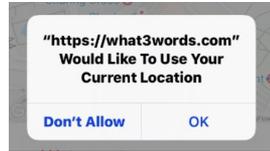
Retrieve a what3words address

Caller doesn't have the what3words app

1. Type the following message into your SMS tool or select this message if you have it saved in your system. Press send.



2. Ask the caller to ensure location services are switched on on their device, then ask them to click the link in the SMS.
3. They might see a pop-up message asking them to allow what3words to use their location. Tell them to click 'Allow' or 'OK' – this will vary by device.



4. Ask the caller to read the three words that appear on their screen back to you.



Things to consider

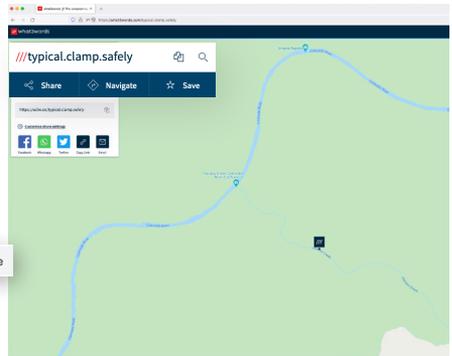
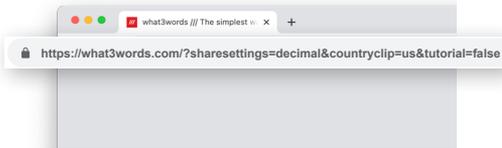
- The app works offline, even in areas with no internet access, by using the device's GPS signal.
- The GPS signal is less accurate indoors. If appropriate, call taker can ask callers to step outside before retrieving their what3words address.
- Ask the caller for the GPS accuracy reading to check that it is giving a good signal.
- The caller must have their location services switched on for the correct what3words address to be retrieved. If appropriate, the call taker can guide the caller on how to switch location services on.

Step 2: Searching and Verifying a what3words address

1. It is best practice to use what3words via <https://what3words.com/?sharesettings=decimal&countryclip=us&tutorial=false>
2. Enter the caller's three words into the search bar in the format **word.word.word** separating each word with a dot.

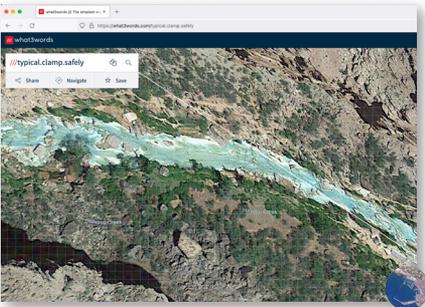
The link is designed specifically for your control room and will only search for what3words addresses within your current country.

Please bookmark this link on your browser so you can access it quickly.



3. Switch to satellite view by clicking the icon at the bottom right of the screen and zoom in to see that location in more detail.

At this point, the call taker can confirm the additional location information given by the caller i.e. "I see you are in a park. Are you under the trees? Are there any other landmarks".



Remember to use the AutoSuggest feature to verify the caller's words.

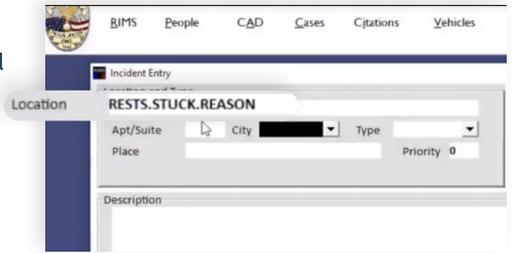
AutoSuggest is designed to spot human errors and miscommunications by displaying multiple options of similar-sounding word combinations.

Call takers can check with callers to ensure the 3 words have been communicated correctly i.e. 'Was it wing or wins?'

Step 3: Share and dispatch

Once a what3words address has been verified it can be shared with the response team using these methods. Never share an unverified address.

what3words is built into many Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Command and Control systems. If what3words is integrated into your software you will be able to enter a what3words address directly. They can also be easily converted to grid references, coordinates or another preferred sharing format.

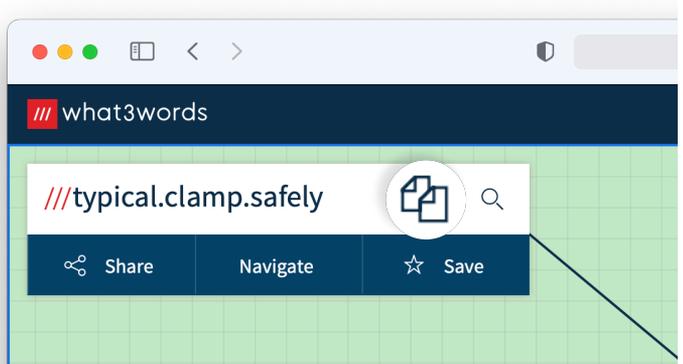


If your team does not have a CAD integration with what3words, when sharing an address we recommend using the copy and paste feature to prevent any spelling errors. Remember that other teams may have to manually enter the address into a navigation tool, so it is important the address is shared accurately.



Tip

You can copy & paste easily by clicking the icon  and right clicking paste into your CAD system entry field or dispatch notes.



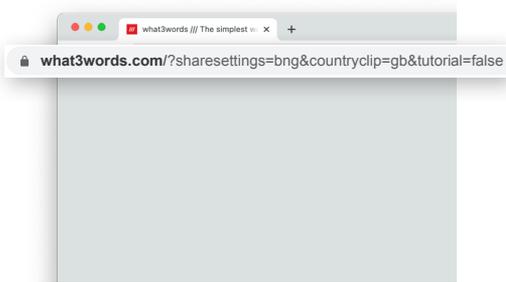
Remember to also share the caller's descriptive location information to give the response team as much detail as possible.

Step 4: How to convert a what3words address to coordinates

It's easy to convert what3words addresses into your response team's preferred location formats.

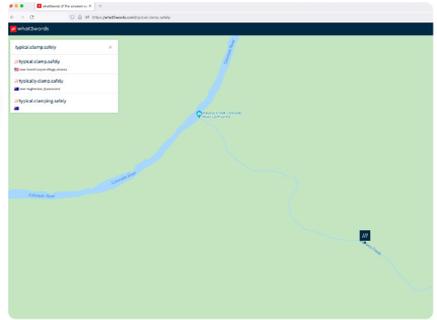
Step 1.

Go to what3words.com/?sharesettings=bng&countryclip=gb&tutorial=false



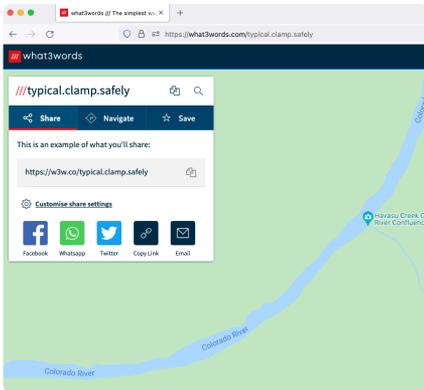
Step 2.

Enter the what3words address, double checking all three words are correct.



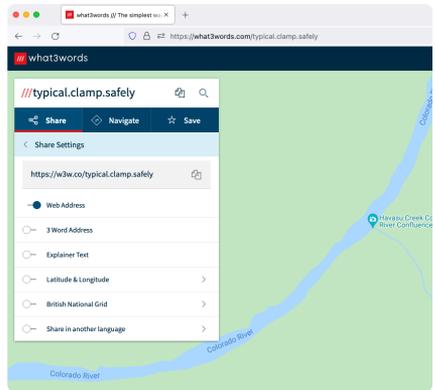
Step 3.

Click **Share** then **Customize** share settings.



Step 4.

Select the preferred format and click **Share**.



Get in touch

If you have any questions or would like more information, our door is always open and we welcome your feedback.

Contact

ashley@what3words.com