

EMERGENCY NUMBER 112: ITS NATURE AND THE NEED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC IN POLAND

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ABSTRACT

Background: According to statistical data, since 2014, only about 20% of incoming calls to the emergency call centre have been actual emergency calls, others are classified as non-emergency or false calls. This leads to the question: Why is this situation happening in the Republic of Poland? **Objectives:** The aim of this article is to show the public's awareness with regard to the purpose of 112 emergency number and to indicate the causes and effects of the discussed phenomenon as well as proposals aimed at changing the existing state of affairs. **Methodology:** Theoretical and empirical methods were used. An analysis was made of, inter alia, available literature on security and education for safety, sources of law and reports on the functioning of the emergency communication system. Interviews with experts, who are the 112 emergency number operators, were also conducted.

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Conclusions: There are many problems generated by the Polish citizens that prevent the proper functioning of the 112 emergency telephone number. The reasons lie primarily in two areas: the lack of adequate education within the context of all social groups and the lack of strict penalties for deliberate performing non-emergency calls or blocking the emergency line.

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INTRODUCTION

A specific type of concern for safety are the efforts to ensure it on the part of the state as an organisation.¹ Due to the omnipresence of threats² in the security environment of each country,³ it becomes necessary to build systems whose essence is to counteract these threats and minimize the effects of their possible occurrence.⁴ The emergency communication system is one of many subsystems of national security. It is responsible, inter alia, for collecting, verifying and transferring data to the relevant services aimed at responding to an occurring threat. It should also be noted that national security⁵ is also the public's responsibility – the citizens of the state that function in various groups, communities, societies and institutions.⁶ The consideration of the indicated system in terms of information has been reduced to searching for an answer to the problem questions: What is the public's awareness of the purpose of the 112 emergency number? Is there a need for education about it and, if so, to what extent?

¹ B. Kaczmarczyk, *Bezpieczeństwo i zagrożenia w teorii oraz praktyce*, Kraków 2014.

² See P. Lubiewski, *Nielegalna imigracja. Zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa*, v. 1, Szczytno 2016.

³ See R. Socha, B. Wiśniewski, T. Zwęgliński, *Cognitive and utilitarian conditions of state security*, Tbilisi 2017.

⁴ B. Wiśniewski, *System bezpieczeństwa państwa. Konteksty teoretyczne i praktyczne*, Szczytno 2013, p. 15.

⁵ B. Wiśniewski, B. Kaczmarczyk, *Security of the state, how to provide it?*, "Science & Military", 2016, no. 2, v. 11, pp. 57–63.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

1. THE GENESIS OF EMERGENCY NUMBER 112

The emergency number has been in operation since 1991, but it was regularized in 2002 by the Council and European Parliament Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service.⁷ With this document, the European Union has forced all Member States to create an emergency telephone number. The basis for this decision was to provide all users with the possibility “to call emergency numbers (in particular a single European emergency number 112), free of charge, from any phone”.⁸ The EU Member States were able to choose whether to keep their existing emergency numbers or whether to accept 112 telephone number as the only active emergency telephone number.

The main idea of creating the aforementioned emergency number was to integrate services, entities and institutions established by law to protect life, health, property and the environment.⁹ This number is handled by the emergency call centres, which are part of the emergency communication system.¹⁰

In Poland, the structure of the emergency communication system consists of seventeen emergency call centres (in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship – two, in the remaining voivodeships – one), which provide comprehensive service of handling calls directed to 112, 999, 998 and 997 emergency numbers. The emergency call centre is established by a voivode and is based in the administrative structure of the voivodeship office. Within the system, the emergency call centres primarily cooperate with the Police, the State Fire Service and dispatchers of emergency medical services¹¹, in order to undertake rescue operations in connection with the received emergency call. A caller who calls a single number will receive help from all emergency services that have competence in addressing the reported threats.

Due to the habits of the society in the Republic of Poland, it has been decided to leave the existing emergency numbers (997, 998 and 999) that operate now in parallel with 112 telephone number. However, the assump-

⁷ *Directive 2002/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (Universal Service Directive).*

⁸ *Ibidem*, § 12.

⁹ *Act of 22 November 2013 on emergency notification system*, Journal of Laws 2019 item 1077 art. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, art. 3.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, art. 5.

tion of the 112 emergency telephone number was to integrate the emergency communication system to one entity in the province – the emergency call centre – and one telephone number giving the possibility of comprehensive handling of emergency calls throughout the country. Since 2016, the system has been operating in the so called target model. This means that the emergency number operator during the handling of an emergency call obtains and verifies the necessary information – excluding medical history – and then sends the completed notification, filled in an electronic form, via the Decision Support System (DSS) to the Police, the State Fire Service and the State Medical Rescue Service.¹² The process of taking over the handling of emergency calls to the number 997 by emergency call centres started in 2018. This means that the police emergency number 997 is operated by emergency number operators in the emergency call centres throughout the country, not by police officers as before. Currently, dialling the 997 telephone number on a phone keyboard results in automatic call redirection to the 112 telephone number. Plans for the future provide that “this process will also be initiated for the remaining emergency numbers (...), i.e.: 998 and 999”.¹³

Therefore, the main concept behind the 112 emergency telephone number was to ensure that all EU citizens would have an access to help from emergency services, regardless of the country on whose territory they would be based. Another equally important priority when creating a single pan-European emergency number was to ensure international cooperation, with the possibility of communication in different languages.

Data obtained from experts and the European Commission’s report on the implementation of 112 emergency number in individual Member States show that operators of emergency call centres can communicate in three languages¹⁴: English – 25 countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, Croatia, Iceland, and Norway),

¹² *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2016 r.*, Warszawa 2017, p. 3.

¹³ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2017 r.*, Warszawa 2018, p. 21.

¹⁴ T. Kijowski, *W jakim języku otrzymasz pomoc dzwoniąc na nr 112 w UE*, “Tomasz Kijowski”, n.d., <http://tomaszkijowski.pl/w-jakim-jezyku-otrzymasz-pomoc/> (accessed: 28.08.2019).

French – 14 countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Italy), and German – 12 countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Spain, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Lithuania, Hungary, and Italy).¹⁵

Thanks to such solutions, this number is available to a larger number of users and solves many problems that have been reported by both Polish and foreign emergency services. International cooperation, as well as the ability to communicate in different languages, helps in cases when an alarm event has occurred in another country or has occurred in Poland but is supported by the 112 emergency number operator in another country.¹⁶

2. EMERGENCY PHONE OPERATORS

The emergency call centres ensure 24-hour service for handling emergency calls and are mutually substitutable, which means that in the event of a local system failure or overload of one of the centres – in the event of waiting time longer than 20 seconds from the moment of performing a call – the call will be handled by the centre in another province. Therefore, it is not possible for a caller to be unable to call the emergency number 112. In such a case, the caller is unaware that he or she has been redirected to another province. This solution is ensured by a uniform way of training the emergency number operators, who have the same strict procedures for handling emergency calls throughout the country.

Ensuring uniform procedures for handling emergency calls and uniform standards of training emergency number operators guarantee an efficient and effective functioning of the emergency communication system throughout the country.

The document which precisely defines the work of the centres is the *Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 5 May 2014 on the organisation and functioning of emergency call centres*. The Regulation sets out in detail the criteria for the establishment of emergency call centres, their functioning, their abilities to perform their tasks and the general procedures for handling emergency calls. In addition, the document specifies

¹⁵ European Commission, *Implementation of the single European emergency number 112 – Results of the twelfth data-gathering round*, Brussels 2019.

¹⁶ *Wytyczne w zakresie sposobu obsługi zgłoszeń alarmowych w sytuacji zdarzeń mających miejsce za granicą, z wykorzystaniem bazy danych Europejskiego Stowarzyszenia Numeru Alarmowego 112 (EENA)*, Warszawa 2015.

the number of emergency number operators and the way how to distribute them into individual centres.¹⁷

The emergency call centres staff consist of such positions as:

- the head and the deputy head of the centre;
- emergency number operators;
- administrative and technical support;
- a psychologist.¹⁸

According to the *Act on emergency notification system*, the emergency number operator has completed the training and passed the theoretical and practical exam, and holds a valid certificate of the emergency number operator. In addition, they are obliged to have at least a completed secondary education and at least a conversational command of one foreign language.¹⁹

Courses for emergency number operators are conducted in the training centre of the Greater Poland province governor, in the Emergency Communication Centre in Poznań. The courses are taken in accordance with the basic training programme, which lasts 5 days and ends with a state examination. The report on the functioning of the emergency communication system states that 233 newly recruited job applicants for emergency number operators were trained in 2017. All applicants took the exams, of whom 116 persons passed on their first attempt and 79 persons in their second attempt, obtaining a certificate of emergency number operator.²⁰

It should be noted that the certificate authorising the employee to work as an emergency call operator is valid for 3 years. After this date, the employee is obliged to undergo a three-day refresher training course in a training centre in Poznań. The training course shall end with an examination, whose pass rate amounted to 81% in 2017. This means that the operator handling the alarm calls has to re-take the exam after 3 years. In case of a negative result, the employment relationship shall be terminated. The consequence is a high staff turnover.

3. FALSE AND UNJUSTIFIED EMERGENCY CALLS

The emergency call centres provide a uniform system for handling emergency calls. An emergency call shall be understood as “information

¹⁷ *Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 5 May 2014 on the organisation and functioning of emergency call centres*, § 1.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Act of 22 November 2013 on emergency notification system...*, *op. cit.*, art. 16.

²⁰ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2017 r.*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

about the occurrence or suspected occurrence of a life- or health-threatening emergency, including an act of violence, or an environmental emergency or a property emergency, or security and public order threats, conveyed to emergency telephone numbers under the emergency communication system”.²¹ However, not every information conveyed via emergency number calls meets these criteria. Emergency calls are divided into: justified, emergency calls; justified, non-emergency calls; unjustified calls; and emergency number blockings. The procedure for individual calls is as follows²²:

- “justified, emergency” calls – the operator follows the guidelines (procedure: the operator obtains the necessary information from the caller, verifies it and transfers it via the ICT system to the relevant emergency service; at the moment of conveying the data to the relevant entities, the call is classified and receives the status of an alarm event),
- “justified, non-emergency” calls – when a call is within the substantive competence of the emergency service concerned but it is a non-emergency call (procedure: the operator provides contact details of the emergency service or instructs the caller how to proceed),
- “unjustified calls, emergency number blocking” – when a call is neither an emergency one nor within the competence of any emergency services (procedure: the operator instructs the caller not to call emergency numbers unnecessarily and terminates the call).

Since 2014, the emergency communication system has covered the entire country. There were reported 21,326,746²³ incoming calls in the first year of its functioning. Information about 3,452,354 incidents was conveyed to the emergency services²⁴, which constitutes only 17% of all calls. In 35% of cases, the remaining calls were calls cancelled before their receiving by the emergency number operator. The majority of them (i.e. 48%) were false, malicious or unjustified calls.²⁵

²¹ *Act of 22 November 2013 on emergency notification system...*, *op. cit.*, art. 2.

²² K. Lis., *Działalność Centrum Powiadamiania Ratunkowego w sytuacjach kryzysowych*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo w obszarach przygranicznych*, v. 2, B. Kaczmarczyk (ed.), Toruń 2017, pp. 199–200.

²³ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2014 r.*, Warszawa 2015, p. 6.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

The year 2015 is similar. There were reported 21,004,785 calls²⁶, out of which alarm events constituted 3,651,251 calls (i.e. 18%). False calls constituted 45% of the total calls, whereas 37% of the total calls were calls interrupted before their receiving.²⁷

In 2016, there was a decrease in the number of calls directed to the emergency number. There were 19,482,287²⁸ incoming calls, the majority of which (46.63% of the total calls) were unjustified again, and 34.1% of the total calls were cancelled before their receiving by the emergency call operator. It should be emphasised that only less than 20% of the total calls concerned threats related to life, health, property or the environment.²⁹

The following year, 2017, was also characterized by a decrease in the number of incoming calls. A total of 18,997,544³⁰ calls were reported within the year. Similarly to previous years, as much as 45% of the total calls were malicious, false or unjustified, whereas 35% of them were calls that were interrupted within the first few seconds. There were 5,454,003³¹ alarm events that were conveyed to the emergency services.

The analysis of the statistical data shows that from the beginning of the functioning of the emergency communication system for the emergency number 112, approximately 35% of the total calls are cases when the caller got off the line before the telephone call was received by the emergency operator. The reason for the above situation is usually accidental dialling of the emergency number, testing its functioning or the telecommunications network coverage. Unjustified notifications, on the other hand, result from a lack of the public's awareness of the purpose of the emergency number.

4. EXAMPLES OF FALSE AND UNJUSTIFIED EMERGENCY CALLS

The statistical data presented above show how large the scale of false, malicious and unjustified calls directed to the emergency numbers is. Callers treat the emergency number as a helpline for legal consultation, enquiries about opening hours for pharmacies or the directory enquiries, forgetting that it is a life- and health-saving emergency line.

²⁶ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2015 r.*, Warszawa 2016, p. 5.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

²⁸ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2016 r.*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2017 r.*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

It should also be noted that among the callers there are people who block the emergency line on a daily basis, by e.g. reciting the Bible for hours, singing songs or telling fairy tales. These people are recorded by the emergency number operators.

As a result of blocking the emergency line by a single user, even several hundred calls may be blocked. According to the experts, these callers have no intention for reporting any incident. Another type of unjustified calls are those where the caller gives false information about an emergency. The following cases have been reported, e.g.: a child who does not want to have a test and informs about a bomb threat at the premises of the school; a citizen who does not like their neighbour and gives false information about him/her.

Equally often, a caller simply does not know what the emergency line is for, trying to call the services to an incident that occurred several, or even more, years ago, plus expressing their dissatisfaction with the failure to provide help. The same applies to an attempt to report an incident which they should report in person, e.g. to a police station (e.g. in case of loss of identification card).

However, the greatest inconvenience for emergency number operators is contact with callers under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants. In such cases, obtaining the necessary information is much more difficult and such people are often very aggressive and vulgar.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the above examples of non-emergency calls are of a permanent nature. As much as 80% of the total calls constitute false information, in which no one needs the help of any of the emergency services. In the majority of cases, blocking the emergency line is intentional and such actions usually do not result in any penalties or consequences.

5. EMERGENCY NUMBER IN SCHOOLS

The data on the number of false and unjustified calls evoke reflections about what can be done to make emergency numbers work more efficiently. Solutions should be sought primarily in education from an early age. As regards education for safety, it should be understood first and foremost as a constant process aimed at improving skills and qualifications. With this in mind, the legitimacy of providing systemic education for safety which only lasts for each citizen aged between 6 and 18 (i.e. in the age range in

which the Polish citizens are subject to compulsory education) should be undermined.

The school subject *education for safety* was created to optimise citizens' preparedness to cope with emergency situations. In education for safety, the term 'safety' is primarily understood as "cultural and civilisational value as well as construction of prevention against threats and elimination of their effects".³²

The existing core curriculum imposes the necessity to familiarize first-grade primary school students with the emergency numbers for such services as Police, State Fire Service and State Medical Rescue.³³ For the next three years, the knowledge of a student in this field, practically speaking, does not change³⁴ – it is only consolidated on numerous occasions. However, children's introduction to the emergency numbers may not be sufficient enough. The curriculum does not require from teachers to share their practical knowledge with their students regarding how to perform an emergency call correctly. Exercises with the use of emergency calls are not conducted during classes.

Only the curriculum developed for the next stage of education (the 4th–8th years of primary school) takes into account the practical skills of students. According to the assumptions adopted in the teaching programme, at around 12 years of age, a student "knows how to properly call for help: he or she lists the names of emergency services and gives their emergency numbers as well as tells when to call for help and how to convey information on an incident".³⁵

The theoretical knowledge on which services are obliged to provide help in safety-threatening situations is not sufficient enough. The good transfer of information is crucial to enabling the fast notification of the emergency services and provide them with reliable information that will affect the effectiveness of operations. Any educational activity related to the help

³² P. Gawroński, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa, analiza jej zakresu przedmiotowego*, [in:] *Podstawowe problemy bezpieczeństwa i edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, A. Wawrzusiszyn, J. Grzyb (eds), Ełk 2013, p. 95.

³³ T. Janicka-Panek, *Elementarz odkrywców. Program nauczania – uczenia się dla I etapu kształcenia – edukacji wczesnoszkolnej*, Warszawa 2017, p. 25.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

³⁵ Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej – Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, *Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego z komentarzem. Szkoła podstawowa. Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa*, n.d., <http://grafik.rp.pl/grafika2/1449904> (accessed: 29.11.2019).

provided to others should be complemented by a simulation in which the acquired knowledge can be tested in practice. The skills acquired through experience have a much more effective impact on every learner, above all on children, and hence they are remembered for longer.

It can be observed that children who have properly performed an emergency call, indirectly saving lives of e.g. their family members, receive a tremendous positive media coverage. Such an example is seven-year-old Michalina, who called for help after her mother had fainted.³⁶ The girl was “the main heroine of the meeting on the occasion of the European Emergency Number 112 Day in the Lubuskie Voivodeship Office”.³⁷ Although it was a nice gesture emphasizing the legitimacy of education for safety and the effectiveness of actions taken in this area, we should consider why such an attitude still causes so much excitement among the society. Such behaviour, even in the youngest children, should be a widespread, not surprising to anyone, phenomenon.

Before *education for safety* was introduced into schools as a school subject, security-related elements were provided under *civil defence*.³⁸ The content on this school subject focused almost exclusively on issues related to the defence of the State. The education reform introducing *education for safety* broadened the area of interest in education aimed at improving the safety of the Polish citizens. The earlier lack of interdisciplinary approach to this subject area has had an impact on the mentality of the Polish citizens who have a sceptic and inattentive attitude towards education in the area of safety. The students’ attitude arises from imitating the approach of their legal guardians and teachers, who do not see the need for such education, “which results, inter alia, from tradition and culture experienced in their youth”.³⁹

³⁶ db, *Jak mała Michalina została bohaterką. A ludzie na 112 dzwonią po pizzę...*, “Wyborcza.pl – Zielona Góra”, 13 February 2019, <http://zielonagora.wyborcza.pl/zielonagora/7,35182,24453742,jak-mala-michalina-zostala-bohaterka-a-ludzie-na-112-dzwonia.html> (accessed: 27.11.2019).

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ B. Kaczmarczyk, *Możliwości doskonalenia systemu zarządzania kryzysowego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Wrocław 2015, p. 6.

³⁹ B. Kaczmarczyk, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa i jej konteksty*, [in:] *Współczesność oraz perspektywy Krajowego Systemu Ratowniczego-Gaśniczego*, v. 1: *Rozwiązania prawno-organizacyjne i ich konteksty*, B. Kogut (ed.), Kraków 2014, pp. 152–153.

The effectiveness of education for safety “depends on the status of research on safety and its broader and deeper understanding”.⁴⁰ By referring to basic human needs, providing an adequate level of safety enables the development of a given community. Lack of safety has a negative impact not only on individuals, but also on whole countries.

Education for safety is part of the compulsory school curriculum for children and adolescents, but it could also provide support for adults, providing them with the sense of confidence that they are able to take proper care of themselves and their loved ones. After all, it is adults who create the level of safety for society as a whole. Therefore, it is reasonable to involve older age groups, with particular reference to parents and caretakers, in the process of education for safety.

6. CRIMINAL LIABILITY

The huge spectrum of threats to which people are exposed forces society to cooperate and help one another. In the case of emergency (which directly threatens the life or health of people), first aid should be performed, which, in accordance with the *Act on State Emergency Medical Services*, is “a set of actions taken to rescue a person in a state of an emergency health threat performed by a person present at the accident site”.⁴¹ Before the relevant services appear at the accident site, all persons who are at the accident site, i.e. at the place “where the incident causing an emergency health threat has occurred”⁴², should take action to help the injured.

The provisions of the law require that anyone “who shall see a person or persons in a state of an emergency health threat or is a witness to an incident causing such a state, to the best of their capacities and abilities is obliged to take action immediately in order to effectively notify the entities – established by law to provide help for persons in a state of an emergency health threat – about the incident”.⁴³ In accordance with the above, an eyewitness should contact the relevant services or report the incident by the emergency telephone number 112 in the first place.

⁴⁰ J. Świniarski, *Edukacyjne aspekty badań nad bezpieczeństwem*, [in:] *Podstawowe problemy bezpieczeństwa i edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, v. 1, B. Kaczmarczyk, A. Wawrzusiszyn (eds), Ełk 2013, p. 85.

⁴¹ *Act of 8 September 2006 on State Emergency Medical Services*, Journal of Laws 2019 item 993 art. 3.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, art. 4.

In most cases, performing an emergency telephone call is not sufficient enough and the victims require an immediate and direct help. The witnesses shall be obliged to provide it, and anyone “who does not provide any help to a person being in an immediate danger of loss of life or sustaining a grievous bodily harm, where rendering such help is possible without the risk of death or serious injury to oneself, shall be subject to imprisonment up to 3 years”.⁴⁴ When analysing police statistics, it is difficult to assess trends in the number of proceedings initiated and the number of offences referred to in Article 162 of the Penal Code. In 2017, 178 proceedings were initiated, of which 137 were proven to have criminal nature.⁴⁵

Many people who have witnessed the incident do not provide first aid. This is mainly due to concerns about lack of appropriate skills, a high degree of social anonymity and the belief that “someone else will help”.⁴⁶ There is also a fear of criminal liability in the event of poor rescue operations. This fear is unfounded, as “the first aid provider ... enjoys the protection provided for in the *Act of 6 June 1997 – The Penal Code for Public Officials*”.⁴⁷ Special entitlements for the duration of first aid also apply to personal goods, which may be “sacrificed ... to the extent that it is necessary to save the life or health of a person in a state of urgent health emergency”.⁴⁸ Furthermore, “a person who suffered damage to property as a result of providing first aid, shall have a claim for compensation from the State Treasury”.⁴⁹

In addition to the Penal Code and the *Act on State Emergency Medical Services*, the Civil Code also refers to the issue of protection of persons conducting rescue actions. The aim of a rescuer is to provide help, regardless of the amount of money involved, therefore “whoever indents to reverse the danger threatening another person and saves their welfare, may demand reimbursement of justified expenses from his or her, even if their action

⁴⁴ *Act of 6 June 1997. Penal Code*, Journal of Laws 2019 item 730 art. 162.

⁴⁵ *Nieudzielenie pomocy w niebezpieczeństwie (art. 162)*, “Statystyka – Policja.pl”, 6 July 2018, <http://statystyka.policja.pl/st/kodeks-karny/przestepstwa-przeciwko/63437,Nieudzielenie-pomocy-w-niebezpieczenstwie-art-162.html>, (accessed: 17.07.2019).

⁴⁶ *5 rzeczy które sprawiają, że ludzie nie udzielają pierwszej pomocy*, “Ratownicy – zaprasza Grzegorz Nowak”, 30 September 2010, <https://www.ratownicy.net/5-rzeczy-ktore-sprawiaja-ze-ludzie-nie-udzielaja-pierwszej-pomocy/> (accessed: 17.07.2019).

⁴⁷ *Act of 8 September 2006 on State Emergency Medical Services*, Journal of Laws 2019 item 993 art. 5.1.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, art. 5.2.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, art. 6.

has not been successful and they are liable only for wilful misconduct or gross negligence”.⁵⁰

As many cases of blocking the emergency lines are reported in emergency call centres, the legislator has introduced a provision on imposing a penalty for persons hindering the work of emergency number operators. Under Article 66, paragraph 1 of the Code of Petty Offences, two cases are stipulated when a penalty – detention, restriction of liberty or a fine of up to PLN 1,500 – may be imposed. This penalty applies in the case of:

- causing unnecessary activity, false information or otherwise misleading a public service or a security, public order or health authority,
- intentional blocking the emergency telephone number without due cause, which hinders the proper functioning of the emergency call centre.

In the conclusion, it should be noted that legal regulations significantly relieve the rescuing person of the burden if he or she already takes rescue actions. Consequences must be taken into account by anyone who mindlessly avoids the accident site without providing any help for the injured, and who, without due cause, blocks the emergency line. The way of thinking and indifference changes when the danger⁵¹ directly affects people who are indifferent to the injured or when it is difficult to report the danger.⁵² Therefore, the public’s awareness of obligation to provide help, the knowledge of the purpose of the emergency telephone number as well as the benefits of proper society’s behaviour (i.e. better chance of saving someone’s health and even life), are important.

⁵⁰ *Act of 23 April 1964. Civil Code*, Journal of Laws 2019 item 80 art. 757.

⁵¹ B. Wiśniewski, G.S. Sander, *Zagrożenie, kryzys i sytuacja kryzysowa – jako uwarunkowania życia współczesnego człowieka*, “Bezpieczeństwo i Technika Pożarnicza”, 2016, vol. 41, issue 1, pp. 13–18, DOI 10.12845/bitp.41.1.2016.1; B. Kogut, P. Lubiewski, *Management and coordination of rescue activities*, “Bulletin of Lviv State University of Life Safety”, 2018, no. 17, pp. 68–73, DOI 10.32447/20784643.17.2018.10.

⁵² B. Wiśniewski, B. Kogut, *Zagrożenie*, [in:] *Wyzwania, szanse, zagrożenia i ryzyko dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP o charakterze wewnętrznym*, R. Jakubczak, B. Wiśniewski (eds), Szczytno 2016, pp. 58–64.

7. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Referring, among others, to the Enlightenment philosophy, a significant connection between properly provided education and national security can be seen.⁵³ In order to create secure societies, people need to start from their own self-improvement. High moral standards are essential for the development of a proper state characterised by “freedom, equality and brotherhood in efforts to provide security”.⁵⁴ A sense of community and solidarity should be translated into help and assistance, willingly given to other people. “The behaviour of individuals, their way of thinking and their attitudes can affect others”.⁵⁵

Satisfying the need for security and belonging are closely linked, but, in most cases, people think primarily of themselves, which has two sides. On the one hand, “a good rescuer is a safe rescuer”, and therefore putting oneself first is justified, but the problem arises when a witness to an incident thinks first and foremost of ensuring his or her own security and does not take action aimed at others.

The ubiquitous anonymity facilitates to perform acts that are commonly condemned by the public. Actions that are unacceptable by the public opinion are very easy to take when a given person is sure that they will be judged by only a small number of people or they will not be judged at all. This translates into a lower level of empathy and willingness to help the victim. The public opinion can be changed through appropriate education, conducted not only under universal, compulsory education.

A proof for the thesis that education for safety should apply to all social groups is the fact that, for example in respect of emergency numbers, “ignorance is often declared by the elderly people, pensioners and disability pensioners”.⁵⁶ It should be assumed that they are not in a position to perform a proper call, even if one of the numbers were provided to them.

Even if the eyewitness knows the emergency numbers, after performing an emergency call, he or she should provide specific information as soon as possible to enable the emergency number operators to take appropriate steps. “The information about ... the threat ... should be provided

⁵³ W. Pokruszyński, *Filozoficzne aspekty bezpieczeństwa*, Józefów 2011, p. 37.

⁵⁴ J. Świniarski., *Edukacyjne...*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁵⁵ B. Kaczmarczyk, P. Dobrowolski, M. Dąbrowska, *Wybrane aspekty edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, Toruń 2018, p. 106..

⁵⁶ TNS OBOP, *Znajomość telefonów alarmowych*, July 2003, http://tnsglobal.pl/archiw_files/078-03.pdf (accessed: 29.11.2017).

via the telecommunications network to the Emergency Call Centre ... The emergency call is then registered so that it can subsequently be directed to the relevant service”.⁵⁷ When a witness does not know what information they should have at the moment of performing a call, the message is much more difficult and time-consuming.

The communication of information about a safety-threatening incident comes across many barriers affecting effective speaking and listening.⁵⁸ The fundamental barrier which determines the clarity of message is an emotional reaction of the witness and the complexity of provided information. Appropriate education reduces the level of stress during performing an emergency call.

Apart from knowledge of the pattern of a properly performed call and the stress associated with performing such a call, a person calling the emergency call centre may be exposed to a number of technical difficulties, such as a discharged phone or lack of language skills preventing communication with a 112 emergency operator.

The use of a systemic approach to this matter allows to define education for safety as a variety of pedagogical impacts undertaken by different institutions, on an ad hoc and constant basis, towards various social groups.⁵⁹ The main task of these institutions “is to equip people with such competences and qualifications that will enable them to function effectively in a dynamic ... reality, and thus, they will be the cause of a real increase in the sense of security of an individual, societies and communities”.⁶⁰

Safety is essential for the survival and development of civilisation, and education in this area is the easiest way to ensure it. Education for safety can take various forms, such as social campaigns aimed at “raising awareness of security problems and shaping attitudes aimed at creating the secure well-being for people and structures”.⁶¹

⁵⁷ K. Chrapek, *Zasadnicze problemy działań ratowniczych*, [in:] *Dylematy edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, B. Kaczmarczyk (ed.), Bielsko-Biała 2012, p. 105.

⁵⁸ *Zarządzanie kryzysowe w Polsce i w państwach sąsiednich*, B. Kaczmarczyk (ed.), Wrocław 2017, p. 44.

⁵⁹ P. Gawroński, *Edukacja...*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁶¹ S. Jarmoszko, *Promocja bezpieczeństwa w procesie securityzacji społecznej*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo i edukacja w zmieniającej się rzeczywistości*, A. Wawrzusiszyn, J. Grzyb (eds), Ełk 2015, p. 17.

An ideal source of knowledge is the media (including television broadcasts, such as thematic, educational programmes or even television series and entertainment programmes), which, when properly verified, can support the learning process by providing information in a more accessible way to the general public. “Any safety information should be verified by experts or by available scientific sources”⁶², which, unfortunately, is not always the case. An additional challenge is that “the thematic scope of education for safety is also changing due to the changes observed in the contemporary world, which creates a risk that the approach to this subject matter will be insufficiently comprehensive”⁶³, therefore, educational activities should be conducted on as large scale as possible, using all energies and resources at the state’s disposal.

CONCLUSION

The emergency number 112 has been functioning in Poland for a short time. On the basis of the statistical data in reports on the functioning of the emergency communication system, it should be emphasised that the public’s awareness and knowledge of the emergency number is slightly increasing. The percentage of false, malicious or unjustified calls is slightly decreasing. The total number of all calls is also decreasing (from 21,326,746 incoming calls in 2014⁶⁴ to 18,997,544 incoming calls in 2017⁶⁵). This may be associated with the raising of citizen awareness through various forms of promotion of safety, which are “implemented in both individual, interpersonal, social ... and institutionalised dimension”.⁶⁶ “The subject of promotion regarding the phenomenon of security becomes the very idea of security, as well as the attitudes and behaviours of people that are desirable from its perspective, and the undertakings taken to shape it”.⁶⁷ In the conclusion of the above considerations, it should be added that the actions undertaken so far undoubtedly bring effects. However, it should be emphasised that solutions in the form of education for safety do not

⁶² B. Kaczmarczyk, P. Dobrowolski, M. Dąbrowska, *Wybrane...*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁶³ M. Dąbrowska, *Teoretyczne aspekty edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy”, 2018, no. 28(3), p. 120.

⁶⁴ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2014 r.*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁶⁵ *Raport z funkcjonowania systemu powiadamiania ratunkowego w 2017 r.*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁶⁶ S. Jarmoszko, *Promocja...*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

exist, whereas, according to the authors, it is an element that needs implementation. Many entities are interested in education for safety, but they do not form a coherent whole, which means that their potential is not being exploited fully. There is also a lack of cooperation, or rather duplication of actions, which leads to the underdevelopment of many areas.

The situation described above is the result of problems generated by the Polish citizens themselves.⁶⁸ The reasons for this situation lie primarily in two areas: the lack of adequate education within the context of all social groups and the lack of strict penalties for deliberate performing non-emergency calls or blocking the emergency line. In relation to the former area, the research shows that it is necessary to introduce systemic educational solutions among children and adolescents by introducing the content to the core curriculum certainly earlier than it is currently, as well as creating an education system for adults and the elderly. In relation to the latter area, more frequent application of penalties under the Code of Petty Offences is necessary.⁶⁹ The actions currently taken do not produce concrete results, therefore, it is important to change the action strategy.

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⁶⁸ B. Wiśniewski, *Racjonalizacja działalności bieżącej na rzecz bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria – Badania – Praktyka*, A. Czupryński, B. Wiśniewski, J. Zboina (eds), Józefów 2014, pp. 21–25.

⁶⁹ B. Kaczmarczyk, *Selected problems of education for safety in the changing environment of threats*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej", 2018, no. 1(26), pp. 105–110.

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