

WARE'S LANGUAGE NOTES

I want to report.....

Following last month's article about being able to clearly identify oneself, we are going to have a look at some of the things you might want to report to the Gendarmerie etc. if the quiet life we lead in France suddenly got upset.

For this, like other fairly fixed situations, there are some useful patterns to learn, the relevant happening just being slotted in. One of these is "On vient de" [ong viang de] This guy On gets about, but somehow always manages to remain completely anonymous! The little phrase means "Someone has just" What makes it even easier to use is that what follows, like any second verb, is the infinitive. On vient de voler ma voiture (My car's been stolen). On vient de cambrioler ma maison. (I've just been burgled). On vient de m'agresser (I've just been attacked/mugged) On vient de m'arracher mon sac à main (my handbag has been snatched). On vient de kidnapper ma fille (My daughter has been kidnapped!) For more immediate help, shout "Au secours, au secours" (Help!)

Perhaps you have had an accident. This time it might be that somebody "On" or it might be "je" doing it: On vient/Je viens d'avoir un accident (I've just had an accident) Maybe the other driver didn't stop – L'autre ne s'est pas arrêté. He's in serious trouble, as you must always stop after an accident however trivial, even in a supermarket car park.

Is anybody hurt? Il y a trois blessés - there are three people hurt - dont deux grièvement [gree-ev-mong] (of whom two seriously). The emergency services will ask you about "victimes" and "leur état" their state. Perhaps the road/one lane is blocked – la route/une voie [vwah] est bloquée [blockay]. A car/lorry has caught fire – Une voiture/un camion a pris feu [ah pree fur].

Then, of course you need to have worked out where you are. Nous sommes sur la RD10 [air day deece] la RN 141 [air enn song karaunt ay ung] l'A20 [lah vang] au kilometre 23 (at km 23), if you are lucky enough to be able to see a kilometer stone. Entre et [arentre.... aye...] (between ... and ...). If you are in town or in a hamlet with house numbers and street names you can be much more precise: Nous sommes numéro ... rue Victor Hugo, or just nous sommes dans la Venelle de Babaudus or wherever.

They will ask you to identify yourself, even if you are not directly involved, so last week's notes will suddenly be very useful! You may need to give them "votre numéro de portable," another vital number to learn by heart – and in pairs like all phone numbers. They will keep your details confidential.

Like all important conversations, it is worth taking a couple of minutes out to think through what to say and how to say it, rather than leaving yourself at the whim of what comes into your head at the time. This would be just as true in an English-speaking emergency.

What number to call? On a mobile 112 does all emergencies and if it doesn't they'll put you through to a man who does. 15 is the SAMU – for major medical emergencies: Il/Elle/Mon mari/Ma femme vient d'avoir une crise cardiaque - heart attack, une attaque d'apopléxie – stroke, perdre connaissance – to pass out/faint etc also for accidents in the home or at work. In some places it is the out-of-hours doctor, too, especially if you need one to call. 17 is for the Gendarmerie for accidents de la route (road accidents) troubles à l'ordre public (disturbances of the peace) infractions pénales (criminal happenings). 18 is for the fire brigade, the Pompiers, who are there for incendies [ang sarng dee] (fires) accidents de la route, accidents domestiques, explosions, dégagement [day gajj mong] de gaz (gas leak), personnes en péril (people at risk), noyades [nwah yadd] (drownings) and inondation [ee norng dah ssiorn] (floods).

Sooner or later it will happen to you, or to someone close, or even just to someone passing by, as French law is strict, if you see a serious accident or crime take place and do not call the emergency services you may be found guilty of the offence of non-assistance to a person in danger, with a maximum penalty running to 5 years in jail!

Source for information content : <http://www.forumgendarme.com/index.php?itemid=18>