family communications plan
Habitat Ready: Disaster preparedness for homeowners

When a disaster strikes, your family might not be together, and communication channels might be down. It is important to plan how you will contact one another and discuss how you will communicate in different disaster situations. When creating a family communications plan, keep the following tips in mind.

BEFORE a disaster

1. Have a list of emergency contacts (fire, police, ambulance, etc.) in your cell phone and near your home phone.

2. Agree on a family meeting place, both in your neighborhood and out of town, in case you cannot get in touch or are unable to go home.

3. Program "ICE" (in case of emergency) numbers into your phone and family members' phones. If someone is injured, emergency personnel can use these numbers to notify friends and family.

4. Prepare a family contact sheet with the names, addresses and phone numbers of important contacts.

   • Include an out-of-town contact for family members to get in touch with when they are unable to contact other family members. Often, during disasters, it's easier to make long-distance calls than local calls.

5. Create a contact card for each member of the family:

   • Keep these cards in a purse, wallet or child's backpack.

   • Include an emergency contact name and number, an out-of-town contact name and number, a neighborhood meeting place, and any other important information.

6. Be sure every family member has emergency phone numbers and a cell phone.

7. Teach children how and when to call 911 for help.

8. Make sure everyone in your family knows how to send a text message. Texts can often get around network disruptions when phone calls cannot.

9. Subscribe to alert services. Many communities have systems that will send out text messages and emails with the latest information during a disaster. Visit your local emergency management website to sign up.

DURING a disaster

1. If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

2. Avoid making phone calls except in serious emergencies. If you must make a call, keep the conversation brief.

3. For non-emergency communication, use text messages, email and social media instead of making phone calls. Too many phone calls can cause network congestion, meaning people in real, life-threatening emergencies can't get help.

4. Keep your out-of-town contact updated on your location and condition.

AFTER a disaster

1. After a disaster, register yourself and your family members as "safe and well" on the American Red Cross website to let friends and family know you are safe: safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php.

2. Update any contact information as needed.

IMPORTANT Information

Out-of-town contact
Name
Phone number
Address

Evacuation information
Neighborhood meeting place
Regional meeting place
Evacuation location

Family information
Name
Date of birth
Phone
Important medical info

Name
Date of birth
Phone
Important medical info

Name
Date of birth
Phone number
Important medical info

Name
Date of birth
Phone number
Important medical info

Name
Date of birth
Phone number
Important medical info

Work information
Workplace
Address
Phone number
Evacuation location

Workplace
Address
Phone number
Evacuation location

School information
School
Address
Phone
Evacuation location

School
Address
Phone
Evacuation location

School
Address
Phone
Evacuation location

Medical information
Doctor
Phone

Doctor
Phone

Pediatrician
Phone

Dentist
Phone

Specialist
Phone

Pharmacy
Phone

Veterinarian
Phone

Insurance information
Medical
Phone number
Policy number

Homeowners/rental
Phone number
Policy number

Other important information

Additional resources

American Red Cross:
redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov
emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/plan

Federal Communications Commission
fcc.gov/blog/fcc-and-fema-how-communicate-during-and-after-major-disaster

Federal Emergency Management Agency
fema.gov
ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/family-emergency-communication-planning-document.pdf

Wallet information cards

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Additional phone numbers and information

--- FOLD ---

Family preparedness plan

Habitat for Humanity®

Emergency contact name _____
Phone number _____
Out-of-town contact name _____
Phone number _____
Neighborhood meeting place _____
Regional meeting place _____
Medical information _____

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

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Additional phone numbers and information

--- FOLD ---

Family preparedness plan

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Phone number _____
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DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

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DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

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Additional phone numbers and information

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Family preparedness plan

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Emergency contact name _____
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Habitat for Humanity®

285 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Suite 2700, Atlanta, GA 30303-1220 USA
322 W. Lamar St., Americus, GA 31709-3543 USA
(800) 422-4828   fax (229) 928-8811   publicinfo@habitat.org   habitat.org

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