



Join with others to prepare for emergencies and participate in America's PrepareAthon! | ready.gov/prepare

Creating your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* starts with one simple question: "What if?"

"What if something happens and I'm not with my family?" "Will I be able to reach them?" "How will I know they are safe?" "How can I let them know I'm OK?" During a disaster, you will need to send and receive information from your family.

Communication networks, such as mobile phones and computers, could be unreliable during disasters, and electricity could be disrupted. Planning in advance will help ensure that all the members of your household—including children and people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, as well as outside caregivers—know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency. Planning starts with three easy steps:



1. COLLECT.

Create a paper copy of the contact information for your family and other important people/offices, such as medical facilities, doctors, schools, or service providers.



2. SHARE.

Make sure everyone carries a copy in his or her backpack, purse, or wallet. If you complete your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* online at ready.gov/make-a-plan, you can print it onto a wallet-sized card. You should also post a copy in a central location in your home, such as your refrigerator or family bulletin board.



3. PRACTICE.

Have regular household meetings to review and practice your plan.

**TEXT
IS
BEST!**

If you are using a mobile phone, a text message may get through when a phone call will not. This is because a text message requires far less bandwidth than a phone call. Text messages may also save and then send automatically as soon as capacity becomes available.

- Outside of your town or city:* Having an out-of-town meeting place can help you reunite if a disaster happens and:
 - You cannot get home or to your out-of-neighborhood meeting place; or
 - Your family is not together and your community is instructed to evacuate the area.

This meeting place could be the home of a relative or family friend. Make sure everyone knows the address of the meeting place and discuss ways you would get there.

OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND INFORMATION

You should also write down phone numbers for emergency services, utilities, service providers, medical providers, veterinarians, insurance companies, and other services.



- Make copies of your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* for each member of the household to carry in his or her wallet, backpack, or purse. Post a copy in a central place at home. Regularly check to make sure your household members are carrying their plan with them.
- Enter household and emergency contact information into all household members' mobile phones or devices.
- Store at least one emergency contact under the name "In Case of Emergency" or "ICE" for all mobile phones and devices. This will help someone identify your emergency contact if needed. Inform your emergency contact of any medical issues or other requirements you may have.
- Create a group list on all mobile phones and devices of the people you would need to communicate with if there was an emergency or disaster.
- Make sure all household members and your out-of-town contact know how to text if they have a mobile phone or device, or know alternative ways to communicate if they are unable to text.
- Read *Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings* at <http://1.usa.gov/1BDloze> and sign up to receive emergency information.



Once you have completed your *Family Emergency Communication Plan*, made copies for all the members of your household, and discussed it, it's time to practice!

Here are some ideas for practicing your plan:

- Practice texting and calling. Have each person practice sending a text message or calling your out-of-town contact and sending a group text to your mobile phone group list.
- Discuss what information you should send by text. You will want to let others know you are safe and where you are. Short messages like "I'm OK. At library" are good.

- If driving, do not text, read texts, or make a call without a hands-free device.
- Maintain a household landline and analog phone (with battery backup if it has a cordless receiver) that can be used when mobile phone service is unavailable. Those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities and use devices and services that depend on digital technology (e.g., VRS, Internet Protocol [IP] Relay, or captioning) should have an analog phone (e.g., TTY, amplified phone, or caption phone) with battery backup in case Internet or mobile service is down.
- If you evacuate and have a call-forwarding feature on your home phone, forward your home phone number to your mobile phone number.
- Use the Internet to communicate by email, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media networks. These communication channels allow you to share information quickly with a widespread audience or to find out if loved ones are OK. The Internet can also be used for telephone calls through Voice over Internet Protocol. For those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities, you can make calls through your IP Relay provider.
- If you do not have a mobile phone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster.
- Use a pay phone if available. It may have less congestion because these phones don't rely on electricity or mobile networks. In some public places, you may be able to find a TTY that can be used by those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities.

America's PrepareAthon! is a grassroots campaign for action to get more people prepared for emergencies. Make your actions count at ready.gov/prepare.

The reader recognizes that the Federal Government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-Federal events, entities, organizations, services, or products.



10 WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN AMERICA'S PrepareAthon!



Access Alerts and Warnings



Test Communication Plans



Assemble or Update Supplies



Drill or Practice Emergency Response



Participate in a Class, Training, or Discussion



Plan with Neighbors



Conduct an Exercise



Make Property Safer



Document and Insure Property



Safeguard Documents

**SCHOOL,
CHILDCARE,
CAREGIVER, AND
WORKPLACE
EMERGENCY PLANS**

Name:
Address:.....
Emergency/Hotline #:
Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:.....
Emergency/Hotline #:
Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:.....
Emergency/Hotline #:
Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

**IN CASE OF
EMERGENCY
(ICE) CONTACT**

Name: Mobile #:
Home #: Email:
Address:

**OUT-OF-TOWN
CONTACT**

Name: Mobile #:
Home #: Email:
Address:

**EMERGENCY
MEETING PLACES**

Indoor:
Instructions:
Neighborhood:
Instructions:

Out-of-Neighborhood:
Address:.....
Instructions:

Out-of-Town:
Address:.....
Instructions: