

## FAMILY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN CHECKLIST

Communication can be difficult during emergencies. Electricity may be out, cell phone towers could go down and local systems may be overwhelmed making it difficult to reach those you love most. Use these tips to create a family emergency communications plan and help ensure that when disaster strikes, you can stay connected.

## Talk About Emergency Plans with Children.

Teach them that communication is important during emergencies so that we can know where family members are and that they are safe. Identify emergency contacts, evacuation routes and meet-up locations. If children are not with family when a disaster strikes, reassure them that there are caring adults, like teachers, coaches and first responders that will be working to keep them safe. Let them know you will be trying to reunite with them as soon as it is safe to do so.

Identify Emergency Contacts: Every family should be equipped with at least three primary emergency contacts: A family member (for children this should be their parent or guardian); a local friend or relative; and an out-of-town contact. Having an out-of-town contact is critical as large-scale disasters may take down local communications and someone outside the affected area is better able to monitor the situation.Write down emergency contacts' home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, emails, home address and social media names. Keep this information easily accessible on cards in your bag and/or the refrigerator. Try to memorize as much of this information as you can.

**Program ICE Contacts.** All family cell phones should have "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) contacts programmed into the contact list with all family phone numbers plus in- and out-of-town contacts. These entries should start with ICE then have the name of the contact.

- **Consider a Landline:** Landline phone connections can often work even when cell phones are down. These lines are also associated with addresses that may make it easier for emergency responders to find you.
- **Remember to Text:** Remind family members that text messages often get through in an emergency even when a cell phone call can't. So in emergency, if your first call doesn't work, try to text your contact.
- **Share Your Information:** Give your emergency contact information to all child care providers, schools, programs, neighbors and babysitters. Make sure everyone has several ways to reach you or an identified emergency contact in case of an emergency.
- **Update the Plan.Things change:** Update the family commu-nications plan as needed especially as friendships and neighbors change and children mature. Review the plan every 6 months and update at least once a year.
- Know Caregiver Plans: Ask child care providers and schools about their emergency communications protocol. If a disaster occurs, how will you be notified? Will there be auto-calls, texts or emails and are you signed up for these alerts?



## www.SavetheChildren.org/GetReady