

Personal Emergency Communications Plan

Developing a plan for you
and your family.

Why an Emergency Communications Plan

Emergencies are a given. They are going to happen. Just as you prepare for the everyday bumps and bruises of life by having a box of band aids and a bottle of peroxide. You need to prepare for the larger events. This presentation provides recommendations to address those larger events.

Basics of the Plan

The odds of everyone in your family being in the same place at the time of an emergency are slim. You will want to consider where your family members are during their regular, everyday schedule. The two most common are:

- Work
- School

Also consider, weekends and vacations. What adjustments to the plan need to be made for special events?

Situational Awareness

- Keep current with local and national events.
Know what is going on around you
 - Every day events, highway closures
 - Weather (Tornados, Storms, Flooding, Fire)
 - Industrial Accident (Plane Crash, Explosion)
 - Terrorism
- “If an event occurs and damages your home, your child’s school, or where you work: what is your plan for communicating to your family?”

Know Emergency Plans

When drafting your personal emergency communication plan, what other plans do you need to be familiar with?

- Work Emergency Plan
- City Emergency Plan
- School Emergency Plan
- Assisted living or Nursing Care Emergency Plan
- Vacation

Outcome from Events

- What is your plan if one of these events displace you from your home or work?
 - Kids are at school
 - You are at work
 - Grandparents are alone
- The communications plan needs to address the most likely events to happen.

Methods of Communication

- Cell phone is prime
- Regular landline
- Internet – Twitter and/or Facebook
- FRS Radios
- Ham Radio

Phones

- During 9/11 cell phones were pretty useless as the towers were demolished
 - Text is SMS and can sometimes get through where Cell phone MMS data cannot
- Land lines were locked up due to the number of people flooding the circuits
 - People had better connectivity calling out of state than local.

Internet

- If there is an Internet wifi link or you can get to a hardwired connection, use:
 - Red Cross Safe and Well Website
 - Web Email to cell phones
 - Mobile Phone Apps like Life360
 - Twitter
 - Facebook

Radio Information

- FRS/GMRS Radios
 - Only good for limited range
 - Will need a GMRS license from the FCC (90.00)
 - Can get overwhelmed if large numbers of people are using them
- CB Radio
 - Good for a few miles.
- Ham Radio
 - Need a license to use

What to report

- First and foremost
 - Who you are? Is anyone else with you?
- Second – Your status
 - Are you ok? Injured?
- Where are you going?
 - If it's a pre-designated place, which one and when you are leaving. Are you staying in place? Give the location
- How long will it take?
 - Are you walking, riding?
- When you will report in next.

Out of Area Contacts

- Reporting status to someone out of state
 - If using a land line, local switches maybe completely flooded, but calling out of state may be possible.
 - Don't have just one contact. If the emergency is wide spread, your out of state contact could be in as much trouble as you are.
 - Determine ahead of time what the plan is.

Gathering Places

- Home
 - Making your way there. What are the likely routes you will take, mark on map and let your family know which route you are taking.
- Away from Home
 - Designate two or three different meeting places. All family members should visit the areas so that they are familiar with them, and the alternate routes to arrive there.

Possible Scenario

- Parents at work
- Kids at school
- Elderly at community function
- Tornado strikes, knocking out local communication, shuts down roads.
- Heavy damage to some schools and neighborhoods

Plan A

- All Family checks in with Life360 App on iPhone.
- Elderly grandparents turn on ham radio scanner to listen for family updates that should be happening in the first two hours.
- Parents at work, main highway is shutdown due to bridge damage. Parents try cell phones but can't get through, same with land lines. Use Handy Talkie to relay status over Ham Radio. Grandparents hear the status.

Plan A Continued

- Kids at school. The school's emergency policy requires the kids to shelter in place until the all clear is issued by the city. Cell phones aren't working, but the kids are able to use the school's computer to send an email and text to the family distribution list. The message reports that they are ok, sheltering in place at the school, and will report back in every hour, until they are allowed to leave.

Plan A – Continues

- Parents report status on Ham Radio. They say that they are OK, that route A is not viable, they will take Route B and will meet up at home. They will report in every hour until they make it home. Elderly hear status on pre-programmed Ham Radio scanner and report back to Kids when they check in.

Plan A – Murphy Surfaces

- The 2nd wave of the storm comes through. Elderly are evacuated from their assisted living to a Red Cross shelter in another town. They will take the FRS radios with them and the Ham Radio scanner.
- A message was put out on the Red Cross Safe and Well web page from the Elderly for the rest of the family to know where they had been evacuated to.

Plan A and Murphy continues

- Parents route B is congested and takes much longer to navigate. Check-ins every hour over Ham Radio. Kids see on the Red Cross site that the Elderly have been evacuated.
- Parents stop off at Elderly assisted living and find they have been evacuated. No news of where to. On no – we've lost Grandma and Grandpa!
- Kids released from school, arrive at home to find neighborhood sectioned off due to gas leak. Kids go to designated meeting spot outside neighborhood.

Plan A In spite of Murphy

- Parents arrive at neighborhood, find it sectioned off due to gas leak. They proceed to the designated area outside of neighborhood. They meet up with kids. 2/3rds of team back together! Kids relay news about Elderly. The family checks into a Red Cross shelter to wait the night out until they can go back to their home. Grandparents check in again on Red Cross Web Site and with Life360. Everyone is accounted for!

The Wrap Up

- Family is allowed back into their neighborhood. Cleanup commences. Elderly grandparents are returned to their assisted living.
- Family talks over the event, makes changes to the communications plan based on what worked and what didn't. Elderly and Kids decide to get Ham Radio Technician License.

Additional

Plans aren't any good if they aren't practiced. An emergency is not the time you want to be struggling to remember what to do.

This is also a good time to check battery supplies, check power devices, all supporting resources you need.

Practice your plan, then practice some more. If the time comes, you will be glad you did.

Important City Resources

City of Hurst has a great Emergency Management Department. For Special Needs SNAP is very important.

- SNAP (Special Needs Assistance Program) is an emergency preparedness database available to any resident of North Central Texas, adult or child, who may have an access or functional need that would require assistance before, during or after an emergency or local disaster.
- <https://apps.fortworthtexas.gov/SNAP/>

Emergency Management Links

- City of Hurst Emergency Management
 - <http://www.hursttx.gov/index.aspx?page=96>
- Code RED
 - <https://public.coderedweb.com/cne/en-US/659569CCE45F>
- Hurst RACES
 - <http://www.hursttx.gov/index.aspx?page=492>

More Web Sites

- Life 360 <http://www.life360.com/>
- Red Cross Safe and Well Web Site
 - <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/zf/safe/add>
- FEMA Emergency Communication Plan
 - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1440449346150-1ff18127345615d8b7e1effb4752b668/Family_Comm_Plan_508_20150820.pdf
- Google Search on Personal Emergency Communication Plans

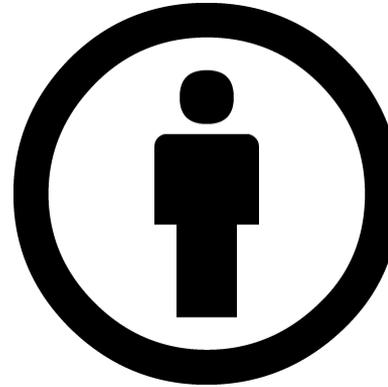
Questions?

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