

Family Emergency Plan and Communications Make a Plan Ahead of Time

You may not be with your family when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance to understand how you will contact one another. A major disaster could disrupt landlines and cell telephone service for days.

- Identify an out-of-town emergency contact. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across the city. An out-of-town emergency contact will be in a better position to communicate among separated family members and provide information to each family member.
 - Make sure everyone in your family carries the emergency contact information with them at all times; carries a cell phone, coins, a prepaid phone card, or has access to a phone to call the out-of-town emergency contact. If you have a cell phone, consider programming the emergency contact person(s) as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. A wallet card should include names, phone numbers, addresses, and Email addresses.
 - Teach family members how to use text messaging (also known as "SMS" or Short Message Service). Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not.
 - Complete a Family Emergency Plan that includes:
 - Out-of-town emergency contact
 - Emergency telephone numbers on a wallet card
 - Meeting places including right outside of your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire and another location outside of your neighborhood, in case you can't return home
- Evacuation routes, including escape routes from office, home, and driving routes
 - Location of utility shut offs for water, gas and electricity
 - Special needs for children, seniors, pets, and people with disabilities
 - Know your safe spots to take cover, based on your local threats, like against an inner wall, under a sturdy table, in a storm shelter, etc.
- For an example of a Family Emergency Plan template go to the Ready.Gov website; the direct link is: <http://www.ready.gov/america/downloads/FamEmePlan.pdf>. The plan can be completed online, downloaded to your own computer from this site, and then printed.
 - Subscribe to alert services such as the Reverse 911 service. Many communities have systems that will send phone calls, instant text alerts or emails to let you know about inclement weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc. Sign up by visiting <http://www.ready.gov/america/local/index.html> for your local Office of Emergency Management web site.

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com®**

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