



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The emotional stress and physical challenges of any disaster seem greater when you do not know if your family is safe. Managing incoming and outgoing communications may be difficult as conditions could prevent your communication tools from performing normally. Power outages, network capacity and other challenges may limit access to communication tools. Alternative strategies may need to be used to successfully keep information flowing to concerned family members. Here are suggestions you can utilize to develop a communication plan for you and your family to use in a major disaster.



Create a communications plan that includes all of the resources at your disposal. Land lines, pagers, cell phones, direct-connect, smart phones and tablets provide options for your consideration. Learn the features and capabilities of each piece of equipment you and your family members will have with them during an emergency. Text messages and the internet may work in the event of a phone service disruption. Learn how to send updates via text and internet from your mobile phone to your contacts and social media in case voice communications are not available. If you have a family with school age students, include the school's emergency communication procedures into your family communications plan.

Important: In an emergency, you still need to call 9-1-1 for help. Remember that you cannot currently text 9-1-1. If you are not experiencing a life threatening emergency, do not call 9-1-1.

Both FEMA and the American Red Cross have excellent information available to assist you. You can visit their websites to review examples of Emergency Contact Cards.

- **FEMA** Preparedness website is www.ready.gov . Consider this information: http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FamEmePlan_2012.pdf
- **The Red Cross** website is www.redcross.org. Consider this information: http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240194_ECCard.pdf

1. Before An Emergency - Develop Your Communications Plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so discuss how you will contact one another. Talk about what equipment can be used and how it works. Think about how you will communicate in different situations. Create an "Emergency Information Document" or "Family Communications Plan" to record how you will contact one another. Set up your plan using the tools you feel the most comfortable using.

- Complete an information document of a contact card for each adult family member. Have them keep these cards handy in a wallet, purse or briefcase, etc. Additionally, complete contact cards for each child or extended family member you want to include in your plan.

- For school age children, put the contact cards in an envelope in their backpacks or book bags. You can tape the envelope to the inside of the backpack. Also include a comforting note for your child, tell them you love them and you will find a way to get to them as soon as possible. Tell your child’s teacher or care provider you have done this so they know the resource is there.
- If you are a parent, or guardian of an elderly or disabled adult, make sure schools and daycare providers have emergency response plans. Ask how they will communicate with families during in a crisis. Ask about adequate food, water and other basic supplies. Ask if they are prepared to "shelter-in-place" if needed or where they plan to go if they must get away.
- Register yourself on the American Red Cross “Safe and Well” website. Through this site, you can post messages to your family and they will know that you are safe and well. www.safeandwell.org

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Local Contact Name: _____
 Telephone: _____

Out-of-town Contact Name: _____
 Telephone: _____

Meeting Place: _____
 Meeting Place Telephone Number: _____

Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies!

2. Tips For Creating A Communication Plans

These are points that will help you improve your communication plan.

- If you have a traditional landline (non-broadband or VOIP) phone, keep at least one non-cordless receiver in your home because it will work even if you lose power.
- Create a “Telephone Tree”. Identify a contact such as a friend or relative (who lives out-of-state or who lives outside of your area) to be the main contact for your telephone tree. This person will be the “go between” to assist your family members by relaying and sharing information. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call or send texts messages out of your area than call or text each other directly. An out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. You can use this person to provide instruction to family members or track the locations of family members. Include the out of state contact information for this individual on your contact cards. Remember send a contact card to your out of town contact.
- Be sure every member of your family has a contact card and has the local emergency phone numbers for your area. Be sure that each person has a cell phone, coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact.
- If you have a cell phone, program that out of state person(s) as **"ICE" (In Case of Emergency)** in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your phone for “ICE” listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Make sure to tell your family and friends that you’ve listed them as emergency contacts.
- 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 be able to get through.
- Subscribe to alert services such as Nixle, Reverse 911, E-notify or other services. Long Beach uses these systems to send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc. Sign up by visiting the City of Long Beach website.
- Keep your contacts updated across all of your channels, including phone, email and social media. This will make it easy to reach out to the right people quickly to get information and supply updates. Consider creating a group list serve of your top contacts. Share this list with your family and “out of state” contact.
- If you do not have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster.



3. Additional Considerations

The following are additional tips when making phone calls and using your smartphone during or after a disaster:

- Take the time to identify local offices or locations that provide wireless internet access (wifi) to visitors or patrons so you can use this service to communicate with family via the internet.
- Keep all phone calls brief. If you need to use a phone, try to convey only vital information to emergency personnel and/or family. This is your lifeline, use the available minutes wisely.
- If you are unsuccessful in completing a call using your cell phone, wait ten seconds before redialing to help reduce network congestion.
- Conserve your cell phone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in airplane mode, and closing apps you are not using that draw power, unless you need to use the phone.
- If you lose power, you can charge your cell phone in your car. Just be sure your car is in a well-ventilated place (remove it from the garage) and do not go to your car until any danger has passed. You can also listen to your car radio for important news alerts. Be informed and stay informed.
- If you do not have a hands-free device in your car, stop driving or pull over to the side of the road before making a call. Do not text on a cell phone, talk, or "tweet" without a hands free device while driving.
- **Immediately following a disaster, DO NOT USE your mobile device to watch streaming videos, download music or videos, or play video games, all of which can add to network congestion.** Limiting use of these services can help potentially life-saving emergency calls get through to responders or medical service providers. Include a deck of cards, or other games in your Emergency Kits to keep your family occupied.
- For non-emergency communications, use text messaging, e-mail, or social media instead of making voice calls on your cell phone to avoid tying up voice networks. Data-based services like texts and emails are less likely to experience network congestion. You can also use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to post your status to let family and friends know you are okay



4. After An Emergency - Stay Informed

These are points to consider:

- AM/FM radio stations will be used to share information.
 - Long Beach specific information will be available via KKJZ FM 88.1
 - Greater LA information will be available via KNX AM 1070, KFWB AM 980, and KFI AM 640
 - NOAA Stations will provide weather information
- Television stations will be used to share information.
 - Long Beach specific information will be available via LBTV (Charter Channel 3 or Fios Channel 21)
 - Greater LA information will be available via KCBS, KNBC, KTLA, KABC, KCAL, KTTV, and KCOP.
- Internet Options (you may have to register prior to the event)
 - Long Beach will use e-notify to make announcements
 - Long Beach will use Facebook to share information
- Wireless Options (you have to register prior to the event)
 - E-notify
 - Reverse 911
 - Nixle

- HAM Radio Operators and CERT Volunteers

5. City of Long Beach Emergency Phone Numbers:

Emergencies Dial 911

- Gas Department: 562.570.2140
- Water and Sewer: 562.570.2390
- Public Works: 562.570.2700
- Police Non-Emergency 562.435.6711
- Fire Non-Emergency 562.570.9400
- Edison 562.500.5000

Social Media:

You can also sign up for any of the City of Long Beach social media accounts and receive updates on the City's disaster responses, as well as information to assist you.

www.facebook.com/CityofLongBeachCA

<https://twitter.com/LongBeachCity>

www.youtube.com/user/LongBeachCityCA

