

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

FACILITATOR GUIDE



FEMA

ACTIVITY: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Purpose: In this activity, participants will learn how to create a communications plan.

Objectives:

- Describe situations in which emergency communications are needed.
- Identify emergency contacts for individuals and families.
- Explain how to develop a communications plan that can be used in emergency situations.

Preparation and Needed Materials: Prior to conducting this activity, you may want to:

- Find an example in the local area or region where emergency communications were needed.
- Prepare handouts of the Family Communications Plan and wallet card in FEMA's *Are You Ready?* booklet. You can access communications plan and wallet card templates at the following Web site: <http://www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/index.html>
- Develop a sample communications plan and wallet card to use as examples. The card should be laminated to protect it from wear; the communications plan could also be laminated if desired.
- Have several copies of local telephone books for participants to use as they develop their communications plans and wallet cards.

Presentation Tips:

- Welcome participants to the session.
- Explain that by the end of the session, they will be able to develop a communications plan and wallet card for use in emergencies.
- Give an example in the area or region where emergency communications were needed. Ask participants to think about what they would do in that situation. Ask: "Would you be able to reach family members, friends, or caregivers to check on them or let them know where you are?"

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Presentation Tips: (Continued)

- Acknowledge the answers and then present the following key points:
 - Emergency situations may occur at home, at work, at other locations, or while traveling.
 - Communications systems normally relied on may be disrupted or completely out of service.
 - Individuals and families can create a communications plan to reach family, friends, or caregivers in these emergency situations.
- Distribute the Plan To Stay in Touch handout. Note that some examples of plans or cards include Social Security numbers. For privacy purposes, you may not want to include these numbers. Show the examples that you created.
- Optional Activity: If feasible, have the participants develop communications plans and wallet cards in your meeting place, using the second page of the Plan To Stay in Touch handout as a plan template.
 - Divide participants into family groups or groups of individuals.
 - Tell participants that local telephone books are available for their use.
 - Give participants 20 minutes to create communications plans and wallet cards.
 - Reassemble the participants and review their plans and wallet cards.
 - Advise participants to review their plans and cards with other family members, friends, and/or caregivers before finalizing and laminating them. (You may wish to partner with a community organization to help people with lamination after the session.)
- Thank the participants for attending the session.

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PLAN TO STAY IN
TOUCH: HANDOUT



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In emergency situations you may need to contact family members, friends, or caregivers to check on their safety or advise them of your status. Follow the steps below to develop a communications plan.

**PUT YOUR
COMMUNICATIONS
PLAN IN YOUR
DISASTER KIT!**

Identify contacts.

List the names, addresses, phone numbers, and other essential information for family members, friends, caregivers, and other frequently used contacts. Here are some tips:

- Immediate family members include those still living in your home, those who are away temporarily (at college, deployed, etc.), and those living elsewhere in your community or in other places.
- Extended family members, such as parents and other relatives, may live close by or in other places. They, too, may need to be contacted if they are affected by an emergency, or they may need to know your status if the emergency occurred in your area.
- Some family members may be entrusted to caregivers in group homes, nursing homes, or other facilities or programs. Some may live alone but depend on health care or personal care providers for support. Again, you or they may be affected by an emergency and need to be contacted.
- Don't forget your pets. They may be left at home or in kennels while you are away during the day or on extended periods of travel. In emergencies, you may need to know if they are safe or if someone can check on them.

Be sure to include an out-of town contact. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

Organize your contact information into a communications plan.

You may also want to prepare wallet cards with contact information, to laminate and store in your wallet for ready access. (See the next page.)

Review your communications plan.

After you have assembled your plan and cards, review them with family members and other contacts to ensure the information is complete and accurate. Add alternate phone numbers or contacts as needed.

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PLAN TO STAY IN
TOUCH: HANDOUT



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Share your plan.

- Be sure every family member knows the phone number of the emergency contact and has a cell phone, coins to use a pay phone, or a prepaid phone card.
- Teach family members or friends to use text messaging. Text messages can often get through network disruptions when phone calls can't.
- If you have a cell phone, program your primary contact as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency). In an accident, emergency personnel will often check ICE listings. Tell your contact that you've listed him or her as your emergency contact person.
- Include your communications plan in your family disaster kit. Post a copy on the refrigerator or near a telephone. Distribute copies of your plan to everyone who needs to have one.
- Update your plan and wallet card as needed.

Stay informed.

- Subscribe to alert services. Many communities now have systems that will send instant text alerts or emails about bad weather, road closings, or local emergencies. Sign up by visiting your local office of emergency management Web site.

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PLAN TO STAY IN TOUCH: HANDOUT



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Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Fill out these cards and give one to each member of your family to make sure they know who to call and where to meet in case of an emergency.

Additional Important Phone Numbers & Information:

Family Emergency Plan 

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION: _____

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES Ready. ✓

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Additional copies of this sheet can be found at <http://www.ready.gov>.