



Tip Sheet: How to Communicate During Disasters

Before a Disaster: How to Prepare Your Home and Mobile Device*

1. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in your cell phone and near your home phone.
2. Have charged batteries and car-phone chargers available for back-up power for your cell phone.
3. If you have a traditional landline phone, keep at least one non-cordless phone in your home, because it will work even if you lose power.
4. Prepare a family contact sheet with at least one out-of-town contact. Often it's easier to make long-distance rather than local calls during an emergency
5. Program "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) contacts into your cell phone so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you can't use your phone. Let your ICE contacts know of any medical issues or other special needs you may have.
6. If you are evacuated and have call-forwarding on your home phone, forward your home phone number to your cell phone number.
7. If you do not have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone card to use.
8. Have a battery-powered radio or television available—keep spare batteries on hand.
9. Subscribe to text alert services from local or state governments to receive emergency alerts.

During and After a Disaster: How to Reach Friends, Loved Ones & Emergency Services

1. If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 911.
2. 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. Texts and emails are less likely to experience network congestion.
3. Register yourself at American Red Cross's *Safe and Well* program www.redcross.org/safeandwell.
4. Keep all phone calls brief to avoid tying up the lines. Just share vital information.
5. Conserve your cell phone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in sleep mode, and closing apps you are not using that draw power.
6. If you lose power, you can charge your cell phone in your car. Just be sure your car is in a well-ventilated place – not in a garage – and do not go to your car until any danger has passed. You can also listen to local radio stations in your car for important news alerts.
7. Tune into local TV and radio stations for important news alerts.
8. Do not talk, text or tweet on a cell phone while driving, unless you have hands free device.
9. Immediately following a disaster, resist using 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 life-saving emergency calls get through to 9-1-1.

**Consumers with questions about their particular mobile phone devices should contact their wireless provider or equipment manufacturer.*

For more information on preparing for emergencies, visit www.Ready.wv.gov