

Your family may not be together when a storm or other disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another. Think about how you will communicate in different situations.

Complete 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 in your family. Put the cards in their backpacks or book bags.

Check with your children's day care or school. Facilities designed for children should include identification planning as part of their emergency plans.

### Family

#### Communication Tips

Identify a contact such as a friend or relative who lives out-of-state for household members to notify they are safe. 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.

Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has a cell phone or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. If you have a cell phone, program that person(s) as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your 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. Many communities now have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc. Sign up by visiting your local Office of Emergency Management web site.

If you are a parent, or guardian of an elderly or disabled adult, make sure schools and daycare providers have emergency response plans.

Like individuals and families, schools, daycare providers, workplaces, neighborhoods and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans.

Ask about plans at the places where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. If none exist, consider volunteering to help develop one. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead, and communicate with others in advance.

Ask how they will communicate with families during a crisis.

Ask if they store adequate food, water and other basic supplies.

Find out if they are prepared to "shelter-in-place" if need be, and where they plan to go if they must get away.

For more information on developing emergency preparedness plans for schools, please visit the U.S. Department of Education.

***A family emergency plan form as well as contact cards, can be downloaded from***

***[www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan)***