

## Family Emergency Communications Plan

### Out-of-State Contact

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Local Contact

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Nearest Relative

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Work Numbers

Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

### School Phone Numbers

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Telephone Numbers

Police \_\_\_\_\_

Fire \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Physicians

Name \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Reunion Locations

Right outside home \_\_\_\_\_

Away from Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

### Route to Away location

\_\_\_\_\_

## Preparedness #9

### Family Communications During an Emergency



Only Percy seemed happy that the Titanic was taking on water.

Most of us tend to think of the telephone as the first thing we would use to contact our families and loved ones if an emergency were to happen locally. Although telephones may be helpful, you should be prepared to use any and all means at your disposal to communicate with family members should ***there be reasons why a telephone may not be useful.*** There are three principal reasons why this is so.

- the event causing the emergency has destroyed or interrupted telephone systems
  - Government emergency response agencies have commandeered phone lines (very common)
  - high voice traffic loads prevent others from accessing the system
- In general, you should know that “the more serious the need, the less likely phone service is to be available”. The two most appropriate responses to this dilemma are to minimize the need to communicate during an emergency and communicate using alternate means.

**Minimizing the need to communicate** during an emergency can be achieved by planning beforehand for possible needs. Since most of our emergency communications involves rounding up family members from their various daytime or evening activities, you might wish to develop a plan to help family members know how and where to proceed during an emergency. We encourage you to do the following...

- have a battery powered AM/FM radio so that you can stay informed
- know school and work place policies about releasing students or employees during an emergency
- make sure your spouse and children know where you will go during an emergency
- have a primary and alternate assembly location (for your children the alternate assembly location should be a home with an adult such as a stay-at-home mom.)
- Store emergency supplies and clothing for family members at work, school, or in the car. (You may have to buy their least favorite snack so that they don't disappear the first week.)

**In-person alternatives**, such as driving to the school or work-site or sending a trusted neighbor or friend may also work for many families. However, this method may also be inadequate depending on the distance to be traveled and the prevailing traffic, road, and weather conditions.

**Two-way radio alternatives** might work for your family in an emergency. Because most radios use frequencies which travel only Line-Of-Sight (do not follow the curve of the earth) physical obstructions between the transmitting and receiving antennas are often the limiting factor. Below are some examples and their limitations.

**FMRS/GMRS radios.** These radios are small hand-held transceivers that are commonly sold in department stores. Prices are in the range of \$25 to \$60 per unit. The range of these units is from one to 8 miles and they typically work well in open fields and less well in housing areas. The GMRS radios have greater power and therefore greater range than FMRS radios (less than 4 miles) but require a license issued by the FCC. (\$80)

**Citizens Band (CB) radios:** Most CB radios are based on automobile 12 volt connections which assures the availability of power in case of an AC power outage. There is currently little traffic on most CB channels in central Illinois, but it is unknown how congested the frequencies might become during an emergency. CB radios typically have a range of from 4 to 15 miles depending on terrain. New CB radios can be purchased for from \$40 to \$100. To this add another \$40 to \$100 for a good antenna and antenna cable.

**Ham (amateur) Radio:** Amateur radio use is closely regulated by FCC, and licensing is required prior to use. In order to obtain a license you must take and pass a written test. The license costs nothing but there is a fee to take the test (\$14). Self-study materials are available and generally

require about 12 to 24 hours of study per license level.

The cost for amateur radio equipment is usually not trivial. Short-range Handheld transceivers (HT) can be purchased for about \$50 and up. Mobile radios for your vehicle, capable of both short and extremely long distance (HF, VHF, SHF) communications start at about \$700. Add to this the cost of antennas, cables, power supplies (to operate mobile units as a fixed station) and other books and materials and you can easily spend \$1200 or more to complete your setup. The upside of all this is that Amateur radio is well regulated and provides access to a useful community of people who are likewise interested in emergency communications.

### **A Family Emergency Communications Plan**

Each family Emergency Communications Plan will vary greatly depending on the nature of the family, work and school locations of family members, and the nature of the emergency. However, there are critical elements that should be included in most plans....

- A list of contact numbers, and primary and alternate assembly points (probably home and perhaps a neighbors home), routes to take if you must leave the area.
- Recommendations for how each family member is to be contacted.
- Recommendations for children who are at home in the absence of parents.
- Recommendations for leaving messages for other family members if individual family members leave the home for any reason.
- Recommendations for reporting to the Bishop your family needs and intent.
- Recommendations for contacting Home/Visit Teach families and reporting.
- Recommendations for what to take if your family abandons the home.

### **Travel recommendations during and after an emergency.**

- Avoid traveling alone in the aftermath of an emergency or large scale disaster
- Maintain at least a half tank of fuel in your vehicles at all times.
- Keep one or two days rations in the trunk of your car along with pepper spray.
- Carry a good set of maps.