



Emergency Preparedness

Create a Communications Plan*

In an emergency, one of the first things we want to do is communicate with our family and friends to find out if they are okay, to let them know how we are doing, and to reach out for help if needed. However, local communications might be very difficult or even impossible, and many of the ways we are used to communicating may not be working.

Create a communications plan. In addition to making preparations for food, water, medicine, power and transportation, prepare for ways to search and communicate with friends, family and caregivers.. The following are some things to think about when making your plan:

⚙️ Keep a Printed Copy of Phone Numbers.

Many of us store important phone numbers in our phones and computers. Make sure you also keep a printed copy, in case you can't access your electronic devices.

⚙️ Use Texting.

Texting may be more reliable for local communications than a phone call; texts automatically retry to deliver a message when service is busy.

⚙️ Identify Out of Area Contact.

Phone service in the immediate areas might be overwhelmed, but reaching someone out of the area has a higher chance of being successful. Arrange with a friend or relative in another state to be your Out of Area Contact. Give their name and phone number to those with whom you will want to communicate. Your Out of Area Contact can coordinate information-sharing until local communications are possible.

⚙️ Post Messages Online.

If you have internet connection, you can use the Red Cross Safe and Well registry program to post messages about yourself and search for loved one. Facebook's Safety Check feature has also become a great way to post message and connect. For more information, visit: facebook.com/about/safetycheck/.



Additional Resources

Ready: Prepare, Plan, Stay Informed—Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs: ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs.

Red Cross: www.redcross.org.

Winter Weather Tips: takewinterbystorm.org.

Washington State Independent Living Council: wasilc.org/InclusiveEmergencyPreparedness.html

*Information provided by Deborah Witmer, Vulnerable Populations Coordinator
Emergency Management, Seattle Human Services Department