



Family Emergency Plan

- Identify 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.
- Be sure every member of your family **knows the phone number** and has a cell phone, **coins**, 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 www.westchestergov.com/CENS for updates from the Westchester County Office of Emergency Management and www.nyalert.gov for updates from New York State Emergency Management Office.

Planning to Stay or Go

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay where you are or evacuate. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, including what you are learning here, to determine if there is an immediate danger. In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for information or official instruction as it becomes available.

Emergency Plans

Use the New Online Family Emergency Planning Tool created by the Ready Campaign in conjunction with the Ad Council to prepare a printable Comprehensive Family Emergency Plan:

<http://ready.adcouncil.org/beprepared/fep/index.jsp>

Use the New Quick Share application to help your family in assembling a quick reference list of contact information for your family, and a meeting place for emergency situations:

<http://ready.adcouncil.org/beprepared/quickshare.html>

You may also want to **inquire about emergency plans** at places where your family spends time: **work**, **daycare** and **school**. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. 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.