

Tips for Developing an Emergency Communications Plan

Whether family members are at work or school, in the same home or geographically separated, AT&T reminds consumers to be **AWARE** — Always Watchful, Alert and Ready in an Emergency — with tips for developing an emergency communications plan, such as:

- **Create a Plan.** Develop an emergency communications plan, including communications methods and individuals to call. Post it on the refrigerator, keep a copy with emergency supplies and provide copies to each family member.
- **Conduct an Inventory.** Know all of the options you have to communicate during an emergency, including all of your family members' wireless phones and/or your home phone. In an emergency, having a dependable connection to dial 9-1-1 is essential. The more ways you have to contact 9-1-1 and reach emergency assistance, the better. Review existing communications devices and determine whether family members would benefit by adding any services or phones that enable everyone to stay connected.
- **Have a Backup Phone.** Be sure that you have at least one corded telephone that is not dependent on electricity in case of an electrical power outage. Cordless telephones usually have receivers that are electrically charged, and thus will not work if there is a power outage. Consider keeping a basic hard-wired phone and a wireless phone on hand for emergencies to enable communication with safety officials and loved ones, even when the power is out.
- **Compile Vital Information and Equip Family Members.** Create a communications safety tool box, which includes a prioritized list (both electronically and hard copy) of phone numbers and e-mail addresses for family members, copies of business cards and personal documents such as passports and copies of birth certificates. Also, make sure that you have easy access to emergency phone numbers such as local hospitals, your personal doctor and your home insurance agent, by programming numbers into your wireless phone or your home phone's speed dial.
- **Teach Your Children How to Dial 9-1-1.** Children can learn about 9-1-1 and how to stay calm in an emergency at a young age. Make sure your child knows what to do in an emergency. Talk to them about which situations are considered emergencies and the proper use of 9-1-1. Practice dialing 9-1-1 on a home phone handset that is not connected to the phone lines. Establish a "home base," or a central location where a home phone is stationed so it can be reached quickly to dial for help.
- **Create IDs.** Create photo IDs for every family member using the template available on www.att.com/vitalconnections.
- **Know Where to Meet.** Agree on a physical and virtual meeting place such as a voice mailbox or online chat site.
- **Practical Wireless Phone Tips:**
 - Familiarize yourself with the text-messaging capabilities of your phone. Texting can be a quick and easy way to communicate with loved ones if voice calls aren't getting through.
 - Keep your wireless phone batteries charged at all times. Have an alternate plan to recharge your battery in case of power outages (e.g., charging via your car charger, extra wireless phone batteries, use of a disposable wireless phone battery).

- Keep your wireless phone dry. The biggest threat to your device during a hurricane is water, so keep your equipment safe from the elements.
- Forward your home number to your wireless number in the event of an evacuation. Since call forwarding is based out of the telephone central office, you will get incoming calls from your landline phone, even if your local telephone service is disrupted at your home. In the unlikely event that the central office is offline, call forwarding may not work.
- Keep non-emergency calls to a minimum.
- When using a wireless phone, wait 10 seconds before redialing a call. This should alleviate some stress to the network. If calls do not immediately connect or if you hear a fast busy signal, try again in a few minutes.
- Use your wireless phone to access weather and news updates.
- Use your camera phone to snap, store and send photos of damaged property to your insurance company.
- **Be Radio-Ready.** Make sure that you have a working, battery-operated radio. The radio can keep you up to date on the latest weather reports, public safety issues and evacuation notices.