

# EMERGENCY FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

**One of the first things that will fail in a disaster is communications.** Unfortunately, it is one thing we need most following a disaster. Most families are separated during the day and sometimes evening. With parents working, kids going to school and their after school activities, we are rarely together at all times.

We already know how important it is to have emergency supplies on hand. You should have emergency kits that are ready to grab and go. Most people agree having a supply of food and water for emergencies are a must. But what about communications?

If disaster strikes, how will you be able to communicate with your spouse or children if the phone lines are down? Establishing a family communications plan now can help save lives during and after a disaster strikes.

Have a family meeting and talk about these potential situations and make plans for what to do and how to reach one another should you be separated.

1. 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, book bags, and school lockers.
2. Talk with employers and school officials about their emergency response plans.
3. Determine where to meet nearby in the neighborhood and further out of the community, as well as where to take shelter within your home.
4. Decide on pick-up locations for the workplace and school of every family member, and who will do the picking up. Select a backup person (family member or close friend) who can pick up your children if you are unable to do so.
5. Practice your evacuation & communications plans, Stop, Drop & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll, and make sure young children know how and when to call 9-1-1.

## 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. Remember, local telephone and cellular communication services may be damaged and overloaded or non-existent, due to the disaster. 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 your local Office of Emergency Management web site at <http://jocosheriff.us/> and then click on the link for “Flash Alerts”.

Having an emergency radio in your home at all times is an essential part of your communications plan. Make sure the radio can receive NOAA alerts, has shortwave capabilities, and has multiple ways of charging. Keep extra batteries in your emergency kit for your radio. In the event of a disaster the emergency radio may be your only line of communications to the outside world.

You can even coordinate a communications plan with your family, friends and neighbors using FRS/GMRS/CB in conjunction with local Amateur Radio Operators (HAM) that have a capability to talk literally around the world.

All Amateur Radio operators must be licensed. In the US there are three license classes—Technician, General and Extra. Each successive level of license comes with an expansion of privileges.

The most popular license for beginners is the **Technician Class** license, which requires only a 35 question multiple-choice written examination. The FCC Technician License exam covers basic regulations, operating practices and electronics theory, with a focus on VHF and UHF applications. Morse code is not required for this license. With a Technician Class license, you will have all ham radio privileges above 30 MHz. These privileges include the very popular 2-meter band. Many Technician licensees enjoy using small (2 meter) hand-held radios to stay in touch with other hams in their area. Technicians may operate FM voice, digital packet (computers), television, single-sideband voice and several other interesting modes. You can even make international radio contacts via satellites, using relatively simple station equipment. Technician licensees now also have additional privileges on certain HF frequencies. Technicians may also operate on the 80, 40 and 15 meter bands using CW, and on the 10 meter band using CW, voice and digital modes.

The **General Class** is a giant step up in operating privileges. In addition to the Technician privileges, General Class operators are authorized to operate on any frequency in the 160, 30, 17, 12, and 10 meter bands.

Upgrading to an **Extra Class** License - The HF bands can be awfully crowded, particularly at the top of the solar cycle. Once one earns HF privileges, one may quickly yearn for more room. Extra Class licensees are authorized to operate on all frequencies allocated to the Amateur Service

### **Amateur Radio License Exam Sessions for Grants Pass**

For more information visit The National Association for Amateur Radio at <http://www.arrl.org/>

**Date:** Aug 24 2012

**Time:** 6:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

**Contact:** John William. Stubbe  
(541) 218-2244

**Email:** baldeagle2@clearwire.net

**Location:** Fruitdale Grange

1440 Parkdale Dr

Grants Pass OR 97527-5288

**Date:** Nov 16 2012

**Time:** 6:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

**Contact:** John William. Stubbe  
(541) 218-2244

**Email:** baldeagle2@clearwire.net

**Location:** Fruitdale Grange

1440 Parkdale Dr

Grants Pass OR 97527-5288