

ABBOTSFORD EMERGENCY PROGRAM

Family Communication Plan



BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property in the event of an emergency.

- Draft a family communication plan that details how you'll connect. This should include what methods you'll use and in what order. Always include an out-of-province contact in your plan. Long distance calls may get through when local lines are congested.
- Program family contacts into your mobile phone. Keep hard-copy lists in home, work and vehicle emergency kits.
- Keep mobile devices fully charged. Add extra chargers/batteries to all emergency kits.
- Teach everyone in your family to text. Texts may get through when phone calls won't
- Consider social media options, like creating a closed Facebook group for family to check in before and during disasters.
- Think twice before pulling the plug on your analog phone. It doesn't require batteries and will work during extended power outages. Ask your service provider for details.
- Identify how your local authorities will share information during disasters. Subscribe to alerts where available.
- Research social media channels and mobile apps that provide critical information for your area, e.g. road closures and weather updates.
- If you don't have a mobile phone, keep pre-paid phone cards in your home, car and vehicle emergency kits.
- Have a hand-crank or battery-operated radio to monitor news reports.
- Consider purchasing Satellite Emergency Notification Devices (SEND) for key family members.
- Just in case communication is not possible. Determine meeting places ahead of time for your family. Determine locations outside of your neighbourhood, and outside of your city.

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DURING AN EMERGENCY

- Text, email and social media are best. Data-based services are less likely to experience major interruptions and require less battery power than a phone call.
- Keep calls and texts short and sweet to reduce network congestion.
- Don't call 9-1-1 unless a life is at stake
- Don't waste battery life on mobile games, apps and videos. Dim your screen to preserve power for critical communication.
- Forward your home phone to your mobile phone if you're forced to evacuate.
- If you have an answering service or machine, update your message with your status and location.
- Expect communication gaps. Depending on the size of the disaster, even texts will be delayed. Trust that everyone is following your plan.

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