



## Village of Ruidoso Office of Emergency Management

### TIPS: Communications During Disasters

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When disaster strikes, you want to be able to communicate by both receiving and distributing information to others. You may need to call or dial 9-1-1 for emergency assistance, locate friends or family, or let loved ones know that you are okay. During disasters, communications networks could be damaged, lose power, or become congested. The first will help you prepare yourself and your mobile devices for a disaster. The second may help you communicate more effectively during and immediately after a disaster.

#### BEFORE A DISASTER: HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME AND MOBILE DEVICE

1. Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers in your cell phone and in or near your phone.
2. Keep charged batteries and car phone chargers available for back-up power for your cell phone.
3. If you have a traditional landline (non-broadband or VOIP) phone, keep at least one non-cordless phone in your home because it will work even if you lose power.
4. Prepare a family and friend contact sheet. This should include at least one out-of-town contact that may be better able to reach family members in an emergency.
5. Program "**In Case of Emergency**" (**ICE**) contacts into your cell phone so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you are unable to use your phone. Let your ICE contacts know that they are programmed into your phone and inform them of any medical issues or other special needs you may have. For example, "ICE1 - mom" and "ICE2 - husband." ICE stands for "In Case of Emergency," an acronym that medical professionals recognize and use to notify the person's emergency contacts and to obtain critical medical information if a patient arrives unconscious or unable to answer questions. (See your mobile device for information (ICE – in case of emergency))
6. If you do not have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone and pre-paid card to use if needed during or after a disaster.
7. Have a battery-powered radio/television available (with spare batteries).
8. Subscribe to Ruidoso text Alert services: Ruidoso E911 Emergency Notification System **CALL ME!** (Go to: [http://www.ruidoso-nm.gov/police/Ruidoso\\_ENS\\_Registration.html](http://www.ruidoso-nm.gov/police/Ruidoso_ENS_Registration.html) or local and state government to receive alerts in the event of a disaster.



#### DURING AND AFTER A DISASTER: HOW TO REACH FRIENDS, LOVED ONES & EMERGENCY SERVICES

1. If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1. Remember that you cannot currently text 9-1-1.
2. For non-emergency communications, use text messaging, e-mail, or social media instead of making voice calls on your cell phone to avoid tying up voice networks. You can also use social media to post

your status to let family and friends know you are okay. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, you can use resources such as the [American Red Cross's Safe and Well program](#).

3. Keep all phone calls brief. If you need to use a phone, try to convey only vital information to emergency personnel and/or family.
4. If you are unsuccessful in completing a call using your cell phone, wait ten seconds before redialing to help reduce network congestion.
5. Conserve your cell phone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in airplane mode, and closing apps you are not using that draw power.
6. If you lose power, you can charge your cell phone in your car. Just be sure your car is in a well-ventilated place (remove it from the garage) and do not go to your car until any danger has passed. You can also listen to your car radio for important news alerts.
7. Tune into broadcast television and local radio stations for important Emergency Alerts. If applicable, be sure that you know how to activate the closed captioning or video description on your television.
8. If you do not have a hands-free device in your car, stop driving or pull over to the side of the road before making a call. Do not text on a cell phone, talk, or "tweet" without a hands-free device while driving.
9. Immediately following a disaster, resist using your mobile device to watch streaming videos, download music or videos, or play video games, all of which can add to network congestion. Limiting use of these services can help potentially life-saving emergency calls get through to 9-1-1.
10. Check [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) regularly to find other helpful tips for preparing for disasters and other emergencies.
11. Consumers with questions about their particular mobile phone devices should contact their wireless provider or equipment manufacturer.

Sources of Emergency Information:

**ENS Registration**



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