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Week 4 of 52: Communications

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We have all witnessed a “communications down” scenario when going through natural disasters. One thing that all of these natural disasters have in common, besides the disruption of our daily lives, is that they are immediately followed by an almost total loss of the ability to communicate with the outside world. Power is lost, telephone services are discontinued, and cell phone service is either non-existent or is so congested that no one can get through. When experiencing these “communication down” situations we realize how vulnerable and dependent we are on the system that failed.

Having alternate communication devices on hand during a disaster can help maintain some sort of communication, as well as help maintain a sense of [self reliance](#) ^[1] during difficult times. Have at least one of the following alternative communication systems:

- Wind up radios
- Emails (if there is a power source)
- Amateur radios
- Family radio services offered by the FCC
- CB radios

When making your choice, you should examine your own needs and match them with the appropriate communication system.

Here are some criteria for setting up an emergency communication system:

- It should be easy to operate.
- Have effective range.
- Have a modest amount of protection against interference.
- Be inexpensive (low initial cost, low maintenance cost and no monthly fees).
- Be readily available.
- Be able to operate “off the grid”.

Preps to buy:

- Signal flares, flashing beacon or flashing emergency light. (I bought mine at a camping store.)
- Compass for all members of the family over the age of 6.
- Two-way radio.
- Battery operated or wind-up hand radio, preferably an NOAA weather radio.

Action Items:

When a hurricane threatens an area, the city suggests families back up important documents e.g., personal ID, security card, [I.D. cards for the kids](#) ^[2], proof of residence, insurance information, medical records, bank and account information, and place the documentation in a waterproof container or reasonable plastic bag.

Don't forget to include documentation records for your pets, e.g., IDs, immunization records, and medications. Having this information prepared and set aside will help save precious time when preparing a home for a disaster.

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URLs in this post:

[1] self reliance: http://readynutrition.com/resources/freedom-through-self-reliance_02022010/

[2] I.D. cards for the kids: http://readynutrition.com/resources/keep-kids-safe-with-emergency-id-cards_29042011/

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