

Your Mission, Should You Choose To Accept It...

...is to learn how your family can use technology to communicate during an emergency, then create a smartphone based communication plan to use the next time you have to gather everybody in a hurry.

Updating Your Smartphones

1

When you created your Family Evacuation Plan (if you haven't done that yet, go do it now – we'll wait for you), you listed the phone numbers, email addresses and social media addresses for each family member in your household.

Now we're going to take that one step further by adding all of that information to each family member's smartphones. While you're at it, add new contacts on everyone's phones for all of your out-of-area emergency contacts as well.

When Time Is An Issue

3

Using a social media platform like HootSuite.com may help. With HootSuite, you can send a single message that can be posted to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn simultaneously, ensuring that your family or friends would see your message immediately, no matter what site they happen to be on at the moment.

Direct Messaging

2

If cell phone service is down and you are unable to text, don't forget that Twitter and Facebook can also be used to send direct messages. Those are personal messages that only go to the recipient – not broadcast to the whole world. If you don't know how to send a direct message, here's a quick tutorial.

First, you need to make sure that every member of your family is following or has "liked" all of the other family members on Twitter and Facebook. That will enable you to direct message each other.

- For Twitter, click on Messages, then Direct Messages and then type in @ and the family member's username. Then type in your message and hit send.
- For Facebook, click the little message icon at the top of your page (between the little people and the little earth). Then click Send New Message and type in the name of the recipient or recipients and click send.

The Value Of A Photo

4

During the Joplin tornado, even lifelong residents found themselves disoriented when the tornado turned their normal landmarks into kindling.

If your spouse or kids don't know where they are after an emergency and need help a quick photo texted or uploaded to Instagram or Facebook could help you locate them. This is especially true of GPS enabled phones or photos with geolocation.

Creating A Communications Plan

5

Once you and your family have updated your phones and completed your evacuation plans, sit down with them to discuss the ways you can use technology to stay in touch with each other during a disaster.

Come up with some sample scenarios; for example, if a disaster were to happen while your family members were at work, at school or running errands during a normal day.

- How would you connect with each other?
- Would you text each other, or would calling or emailing be faster?
- If you have teens or young adults at home, their natural proclivity may be to send out a text or a tweet on Twitter, to update everyone, including you, on their location or situation.
- Find out the types of communication everyone prefers and then create an emergency communication plan that makes sense for your family.

Grab The Sat Phone!

7

If you're in an area with frequent emergencies like tornadoes or hurricanes, live out in the country or have a family member in a foreign country, consider getting satellite phones.

They work in remote areas where there is no cell phone coverage and when cell towers are down. If you don't want the expense of a dedicated satellite phone, there are a few devices like Spot Connect Satellite (www.findmespot.com) that turn your smartphone into a satellite phone.

What If...

6

Another great discussion to have with your family, especially with school age children, is what they would do if they had to get a hold of you but the cell phone system was out, or what to do if there was an area-wide blackout. Don't laugh, that actually happened to us in California!

Kids are so used to technology that they might not have the experience that they need to do things the old school way. The best way to plan is to give yourselves as many ways as possible to stay connected. Then if one or two normal methods are unusable, you'll all simply turn to a different method to reach each other.

Code Word Clearance Or Higher

8

Lastly, consider creating a Family Emergency Code or Word. This is a code or word that only you and your immediate family know.

When a family member says it, texts it or emails it to the rest of the family, it signals that they're in trouble and need help.

It's only to be used in extreme emergency and means that everyone needs to drop what they're doing and establish contact with each other, immediately.

Find My Family ASAP!

9

Find My Friends is an iPhone app that is designed to let you know at a glance where your friends are. But you can also use it to immediately locate your children, spouse and loved ones in an emergency. All your family has to do is allow you access on their phones, and if need be, you can immediately see where everyone is in real time, complete with map and directions.

What's Next?

Well now that you're done Making Your Family Findable, here are More Amazing Things You Can Do In 5 Minutes Or Less

[Create Your Family's Evacuation Plan](#)

[Download and Back Up Your Digital Photos](#)

[Keep Your Medical History At Your Fingertips](#)

[Save Your Albums & Cassettes As MP3s](#)

[Earthquake Proof Your Bedroom](#)

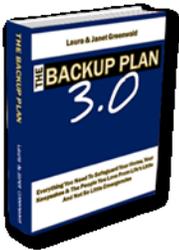
[Fill Out Your Kid's Emergency Contact Card](#)

And don't forget to share this how to sheet with your family and friends!

For more Tips and How To Sheets like this one, visit [The Backup Plan Blog](#), or check out our books at [GetYourStuff Together.com](#)

*That Backup Plan of yours is coming along nicely.
Here are a few other resources you're gonna love...*

*Laura & Jan Greenwald
Authors/Creators of Get Your Stuff Together*



Our newest program [The Backup Plan 3.0](#)! Quick and easy steps you can take **right now**, to keep everything that's important to you, safe, sound and accessible. Each section covers a different area, from family photos, vital documents and music, to videos, computer files, family history and recipes. Just download the free Grab It & Go Forms and Action Plans (included), complete them and save them to your computer or use the ones right inside the book and you'll be ready to deal with emergencies small (a broken arm) or large (Superstorm Sandy). [Pick up your Paperback copy today at Amazon.com for \\$29.99](#) [Or the new Downloadable PDF Edition for \\$8.00.](#) [Read more about it](#)