

Where Should We Start Building a Family Communication Plan?

“Where do we start?”

There are hundreds of things you can buy and dozens of skills you can learn, but in my opinion, the very first step isn't purchasing equipment.

It's creating a **Family Communication Plan**.

When an emergency happens, families are often separated. Parents are at work, children are at school, and other family members may be traveling. Cell phones can become overloaded or lose service, and confusion quickly replaces calm.

A communication plan gives everyone a shared understanding of what to do before the emergency happens.

Here's a simple way to get started:

Step 1: Gather everyone in your household for a family meeting.

Step 2: Make sure everyone knows the important phone numbers—not just what's stored in their phone.

Step 3: Choose two meeting locations:

- One close to your home if you have to evacuate quickly.
- One outside your neighborhood if your entire area is affected.

Step 4: Select an out-of-town friend or relative who can serve as your family's check-in contact. Sometimes it's **easier to call outside** the affected area than across town.

Step 5: Decide how you'll communicate if normal methods fail. Text messages, email, social media, amateur radio, GMRS, or other alternatives may all have a place in your plan.

Step 6: Write the plan down. Every family member should have a copy, and everyone should know where another copy is kept, preferably in safe place. Because the plan contains personal information, do not lose it.

Finally—and this is the part many people skip—

Practice it.

Run through different scenarios. What if you're at work? What if the children are at school? What if the power is out? What if cell service is unavailable?

The goal isn't to create a perfect plan.

The goal is to create a plan your family understands and can confidently follow.

Preparedness isn't about having the biggest stockpile.

It's about reducing confusion, making good decisions under stress, and taking care of the people you love.

If you're just beginning your preparedness journey, this is where I encourage you to start.