



School Safety: Emergency Communications Plan Checklist

When disaster strikes, no other capability is more important than the ability to communicate with first responders, school personnel, and the community. Power outages, cyberattacks, weather, and computer network failures can and will impact the ability to connect. Commercial cellular systems become overloaded, and internet may not be available. It's critical to include communication elements in your school emergency plans so you're prepared for a rapid and effective response in times of stress. Here's a basic checklist to get started:

- Work with local and county first responders (emergency managers, 911, law enforcement, fire, EMS) to identify the ways you'll communicate**
 - Identify primary and backup methods. Possibilities include 2-way radio, land-line phones, cell phones, internet, face-to-face, etc.
 - Identify activation steps/responsible parties

- Identify methods for communicating internally with staff and students, and transportation personnel**
 - Possibilities include 2-way radio, intercom, phone (text and/or digital apps), face-to-face, etc.
 - Identify responsible parties and prepare pre-scripted notices

- Identify methods for notifying/communicating with the community**
 - Possibilities include mass notification, phone, social media, email, text, etc.
 - Identify methods for community-to-school communications
 - Identify responsible parties and prepare pre-scripted notices

- Assess gaps and establish a plan for mitigating gaps**
 - Are there any "dead spots" within the facility or on campus?
 - What equipment and/or actions are needed to address gaps?
 - Investigate existing and emerging technology for solutions (example: statewide "SAFE-T" public safety communications system and FirstNet)

- Train, Exercise, and Update**
 - Establish a defined schedule for training and exercising the communications plan as well as the cycle for updating the plan

For additional information or help establishing an emergency communications plan, contact the Integrated Public Safety Commission, 317.234.1541