

# Emergency Basics Communications

## Why This Is Important



In any crisis, people need to have a reliable way of getting news and communicating with others. Pandemic flu has the potential of causing disruption to many essential services, including electricity, phone, cable, and internet services.

- a. Getting timely emergency news can be crucial to both health and safety.
- b. For medical emergencies and certain chronic illnesses, backup communications are a necessity.

## Emergency News

**1. A good windup, solar, or battery-operated radio should be in every household.** AM/FM is fine, although some people may appreciate having additional shortwave bands. If needed, store extra batteries.



Hand Crank Style  
Emergency Radio

**2. A battery-operated weather radio** should also be included, preferably one that supports the S.A.M.E. alert or a tone alarm.



Battery Operated  
Weather Radio

## Back-up Communication

**1. Land-line telephone.** This is the phone that you just plug in to your house phone jack. It is powered by amplifiers in the phone system, so it may work even if your power is out. Cordless phones or ones that are plugged into an electrical outlet do not work if the power is out.



Land Line Phone-with  
Cord to Handset

**2. Cell phones** use repeaters (at cell towers) to receive and then re-broadcast messages. If the cell tower has no backup electrical supply, your cell phone may be useless, regardless of how fresh your batteries are.

**3. Radios.** Several types are available.

- **Handheld FRS (family radio service) radios.** The new generation of walkie-talkies. They are inexpensive, easy to use, and can provide neighborhood communication.



- a. no license required
- b. range: ½ to 1 mile

**2. Handheld GMRS (general mobile radio service) radios.**

Similar to FRS radios, except:

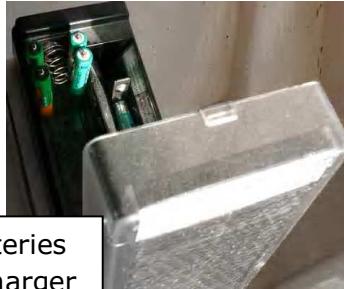
- a. license required
- b. range: 3-5 miles

An internet search of “FRS- GMRS” will provide detailed information on the capabilities, advantages, and disadvantages of these radios.



**3. Ham Radio.** For those needing radio backup over longer distances, consider becoming an amateur radio operator. A license is required for this, but the Morse code requirement has been eliminated. For more information, see [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

- These radios would be useful if phone lines were down but do require electricity or batteries. For battery-powered equipment, a good backup is a combination of rechargeable batteries and a small solar charger. Chargers for rechargeable batteries are smaller than a shoebox.



Rechargeable Batteries  
and Solar (Sun) Charger