

When Communication = Survival



When Communication = Survival

All it takes is one really good crisis and suddenly individuals are left without the means to call home and say, "I'm okay." Whether it's a weather disaster, riots, a terrorist attack or a governmental crack-down, access to the internet, cell phone service, radio, and telephone landlines can be quickly and rather easily disrupted.

Here in America we've seen just how quickly a violent windstorm, forest fire, or hurricane can shut off our communication. It's vital to carefully consider how you would communicate to friends and relatives if your cell phone, land line, and internet connections no longer functioned, and, just as importantly, how you could receive vital information.

Check out some of these alternatives to cell phones and traditional land lines:

Do you have a solar/battery powered emergency radio? If it can be powered up with a hand crank, so much the better. Check out Weather Radio Store for this type of unit.

Two-way radios are an attractive option because of their low cost. Some models even boast a 30 mile range. In reality, even the highest quality radios will rarely have more than a two mile range. However, these radios can come in handy when electricity is out because they operate on VHF and UHF signals, and if you live on a large homestead, these are hard to beat and require no expense to operate.

Breaker, breaker! What's yer 20? It might sound like a really bad line in a country-western song, or a line in a bad country-western song, but a Citizens' Band (CB) radio is a low-cost form of communication that is free to operate and doesn't require a license. Depending on your location, the range of a CB radio might be as much as ten to twenty miles. Check out your local Craigslist or even Freecycle to find one in your price range.

Feeling hi-tech with your cool, trendy iPhone? Did you know you can install an app on your iPhone or iPod Touch that will give you access to police, sheriff, Coast Guard, and fire department scanners? Although this requires cell phone availability, you'll be right on top of the latest developments in a crisis. Visit Edgerift.com to learn more.

A satellite phone may be your best bet when you absolutely, positively have to get in touch with someone, and there's no other way. A 'sat phone' works everywhere, except indoors. These babies sell for several hundred dollars each, but are often the only reliable communication in areas hit by an extensive disaster or in a region with virtually no phone coverage of any kind.

Homing pigeons. I'm only partly joking! Okay, okay, I thought this article needed a little humor. But keep in mind that even though homing pigeons are the only form of communication that you have to feed and clean up after, they're also impervious to electrical outages and even EMP blasts! Someday you may thank me for this suggestion!

Very often, people outside your area will have more up-to-date knowledge of your situation than you will. With a shortwave radio, you can reach thousands of shortwave radio stations around the world. People operating these stations will likely have internet access even if you don't. Radio Shack has a rather dry but informative Q&A here.

People networks. Just as many churches have "prayer chains", "information chains" can be organized among friends, relatives, and neighbors. Choose an out-of-state individual who will serve as a contact point for everyone and keep track of timely, vital news so everyone stays informed. There's a service that provides something like this that you can read about at EverybodySafe.com