FALLBACK RADIO

Family Comms Card

Fill this in together. Keep one on the fridge, one in every go-bag, and a wallet card (page 2) with each person.

LAST UPDATED

1 OUR HOUSEHOLD

#	NAME	CELL PHONE	MEDS, ALLERGIES & MEDICAL NOTES
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

2 OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT

Someone far away who everyone texts or calls. Long-distance messages often get through when local lines are jammed.

NAME & RELATIONSHIP

PHONE

CITY / STATE

3 OTHER KEY NUMBERS

WORK

SCHOOL

DOCTOR

NEIGHBOR

OTHER

4 RALLY POINTS

RALLY POINT 1

At home

A safe spot just outside, if we have to leave the house.

PLACE

ADDRESS OR DIRECTIONS

RALLY POINT 2

In the neighborhood

If we can't get home or the street is blocked.

PLACE

ADDRESS OR DIRECTIONS

RALLY POINT 3

Out of the area

If we have to leave town.

PLACE

ADDRESS OR DIRECTIONS

5 OUR RADIO PLAN

PRIMARY

Everyday channel and first check-in.

CHANNEL

PRIVACY CODE / TONE (HZ)

BACKUP

If primary is busy or no answer after 3 tries.

CHANNEL

PRIVACY CODE / TONE (HZ)

EMERGENCY

Last resort if both fail.

CHANNEL

PRIVACY CODE / TONE (HZ)

CHECK-IN TIMES

NOAA WEATHER FREQ.

Suggested: right away, then the top of every hour (:00–:05).

IF WE CAN'T REACH EACH OTHER

RALLY POINT #

IF NO CONTACT BY (TIME / CHECK-INS)

Leave a note on the door saying where you went and when.

OTHER NOTES (PETS, SPECIAL NEEDS, WHERE THE GO-BAGS ARE)

Fallback Radio provides general information only and is not liable for how it is used. You are responsible for complying with all local laws and regulations.

FALLBACK RADIO

Wallet cards

One per person. Print at 100% (actual size), cut on the outer dashed line, fold on the center line, then laminate or cover with clear packing tape. Folded size is 3.5 × 2.125 in, a standard wallet card.

FALLBACK RADIO — COMMS CARD

NAME

OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT | PHONE

FAMILY PHONE | FAMILY PHONE

MEDS / ALLERGIES

Phones down? Text first. Then radio at check-in times. Can't reach us? Go to the rally point.

PRIMARY CH / CODE | BACKUP CH / CODE

CHECK-IN | NOAA

RALLY 1 · HOME

RALLY 2 · NEIGHBORHOOD

RALLY 3 · OUT OF AREA

FALLBACK RADIO — COMMS CARD

NAME

OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT | PHONE

FAMILY PHONE | FAMILY PHONE

MEDS / ALLERGIES

Phones down? Text first. Then radio at check-in times. Can't reach us? Go to the rally point.

PRIMARY CH / CODE | BACKUP CH / CODE

CHECK-IN | NOAA

RALLY 1 · HOME

RALLY 2 · NEIGHBORHOOD

RALLY 3 · OUT OF AREA

FALLBACK RADIO — COMMS CARD

NAME

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Phones down? Text first. Then radio at check-in times. Can't reach us? Go to the rally point.

PRIMARY CH / CODE | BACKUP CH / CODE

CHECK-IN | NOAA

RALLY 1 · HOME

RALLY 2 · NEIGHBORHOOD

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FALLBACK RADIO — COMMS CARD

NAME

OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT | PHONE

FAMILY PHONE | FAMILY PHONE

MEDS / ALLERGIES

Phones down? Text first. Then radio at check-in times. Can't reach us? Go to the rally point.

PRIMARY CH / CODE | BACKUP CH / CODE

CHECK-IN | NOAA

RALLY 1 · HOME

RALLY 2 · NEIGHBORHOOD

RALLY 3 · OUT OF AREA

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FALLBACK RADIO

Radio Inventory & Channel Plan

List every radio in the house, then agree on one channel plan everyone programs the same way. Pencil in what you know and update it after each practice.

LAST UPDATED

1 OUR RADIOS

#	OWNER	MAKE & MODEL	TYPE FRS · GMRS · ham · other	BATTERY type / size	HOW IT CHARGES USB · cradle · AA · 12V	PRO-GRAMMED	LAST TESTED
1						☐	
2						☐	
3						☐	
4						☐	
5						☐	
6						☐	
7						☐	
8						☐	

2 OUR FAMILY CHANNEL PLAN

ROLE	CHANNEL	FREQUENCY (MHZ)	PRIVACY CODE	TONE (HZ)	WHEN WE USE IT
Primary					Everyday use and the first check-in
Backup					Primary is busy, or no answer after 3 tries
Emergency					Last resort if primary and backup both fail

Standard FRS/GMRS frequencies and privacy-code tones are on page 3. Every radio should use the **same channel and the same code**, or you won't hear each other.

3 WEATHER & NEWS

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FREQ. (MHZ)

STATION CALL SIGN

COUNTY SAME CODE (6 DIGITS)

2ND COUNTY CODE (OPTIONAL)

LOCAL AM/FM NEWS STATION

Find your nearest transmitter and county code on the National Weather Service's NOAA Weather Radio coverage pages (weather.gov/nwr).

4 POWER ON HAND

SPARE BATTERIES (TYPE & COUNT)

POWER BANKS / SOLAR

CAR CHARGERS

WHERE THE RADIO KIT IS KEPT

Charge everything on the first of each month, and swap spare alkaline batteries once a year.

NOTES (ANTENNAS, EARPIECES, ACCESSORIES, RADIOS THAT NEED REPAIR)

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Repeaters & programming sheet

5 LOCAL REPEATERS (ENTER YOUR OWN)

A repeater is a tower-top radio that relays your signal much farther. Ask a local radio club which ones are active near you, then test each one on the air before you count on it.

NAME / CALL SIGN / LOCATION	OUTPUT (MHZ)	OFFSET	TONE (HZ)	TESTED	NOTES (NET TIMES, COVERAGE)
				☐	
				☐	
				☐	
				☐	
				☐	

6 MEMORY MAP: PROGRAM EVERY RADIO IN THIS ORDER

When every radio has the same channel in the same memory slot, anyone can pick up any radio and say "go to 2." A suggested order: 1 Primary · 2 Backup · 3 Emergency · 4–7 local repeaters · then weather. Free software such as CHIRP can program many radios from a computer.

SLOT	NAME ON SCREEN	FREQUENCY (MHZ)	TONE / CODE	NOTES
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

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Quick reference charts

7 FRS / GMRS CHANNELS (STANDARD 22-CHANNEL NUMBERING)

CHANNELS 1–7

CH	MHZ
1	462.5625
2	462.5875
3	462.6125
4	462.6375
5	462.6625
6	462.6875
7	462.7125

Shared by FRS and GMRS radios. A good everyday family choice.

CHANNELS 8–14

CH	MHZ
8	467.5625
9	467.5875
10	467.6125
11	467.6375
12	467.6625
13	467.6875
14	467.7125

Low power on every FRS/GMRS radio (0.5 watt), so range is short. Good for talking within a building or campsite.

CHANNELS 15–22

CH	MHZ
15	462.5500
16	462.5750
17	462.6000
18	462.6250
19	462.6500
20	462.6750
21	462.7000
22	462.7250

Shared by FRS and GMRS. GMRS radios can transmit at higher power here, and GMRS repeaters use these frequencies (often shown as 15R–22R, transmitting 5 MHz higher).

Most FRS/GMRS radios use this numbering. Some older or specialty radios number channels differently, so match by **frequency** if in doubt. Some communities treat channel 20 (462.675 MHz) as an informal calling channel. That's a local custom, not a rule, so check what's used near you.

8 PRIVACY CODES (CTCSS TONES)

CODE	HZ	CODE	HZ	CODE	HZ	CODE	HZ
1	67.0	11	97.4	21	136.5	31	192.8
2	71.9	12	100.0	22	141.3	32	203.5
3	74.4	13	103.5	23	146.2	33	210.7
4	77.0	14	107.2	24	151.4	34	218.1
5	79.7	15	110.9	25	156.7	35	225.7
6	82.5	16	114.8	26	162.2	36	233.6
7	85.4	17	118.8	27	167.9	37	241.8
8	88.5	18	123.0	28	173.8	38	250.3
9	91.5	19	127.3	29	179.9		
10	94.8	20	131.8	30	186.2		

GOOD TO KNOW

- **Privacy codes aren't private.** They only filter what *you* hear. Anyone on the same channel without a code can still hear you.
- On most bubble-pack FRS/GMRS radios, codes 1–38 are the standard tones in this chart. Codes above 38 are usually digital (DCS) codes that vary by brand.
- Ham and GMRS handhelds usually ask for the tone in hertz (Hz). Use the chart to translate a code number.
- If someone can't hear you, first check that the **channel and code match**.

9 NOAA WEATHER RADIO FREQUENCIES (MHZ)

162.400	162.425	162.450	162.475	162.500	162.525	162.550

Seven frequencies are used nationwide, and many FRS/GMRS radios can receive them with a WX or weather button. **WX channel numbers differ by brand**, so match your local station by frequency. Look it up on page 1, section 3.

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FALLBACK RADIO

When Phones Go Down

A step-by-step guide for the first hours without cell service or internet. Fill in the strip, then post it next to the radios.

PRIMARY CHANNEL / CODE	BACKUP CHANNEL / CODE	CHECK-IN MINUTES PAST HOUR	RALLY POINT / OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT

1 THE FIRST 15 MINUTES

- ☐ **Get safe first.** Check yourself and the people with you for injuries. Move away from immediate danger.
- ☐ **Send one short text** to the family and to our out-of-area contact: where you are, and if you're OK. Texts often get through when calls don't.
- ☐ **Turn on your radio** and set it to our primary channel and code. Listen for a few seconds before you talk.
- ☐ **Make your first check-in call** (script at right). Then keep listening for a few minutes.
- ☐ **Get official information** from NOAA Weather Radio or a local AM/FM news station.

2 THE FIRST HOUR

- ☐ **Check in at the top of the hour**, even if you already reached everyone.
- ☐ **Account for everyone.** Write down who checked in, where they are, and how they're doing (log below).
- ☐ **Stay where you are if it's safe.** Don't travel into danger to get home.
- ☐ **Follow instructions from officials.** An evacuation order comes before this plan.
- ☐ **Start saving power** on radios and phones (tips at right).

3 CHECK-IN SCHEDULE

Right away	:00–:05	Radio off	On arrival
first call	every hour	between calls	at the rally point

Everyone turns on their radio at the same time, so nobody has to leave theirs on all day. Use the minutes in the strip above if your family picked a different time.

4 THE RULE OF THREE

3 calls on the primary channel, about a minute apart.

3 more calls on the backup channel if nobody answers.

Then wait and try again at the next check-in.

Still no contact after the number of check-ins in "When to move"? Follow that plan.

5 HOW TO MAKE A SHORT RADIO CALL

LISTEN	Make sure nobody else is talking.
PRESS	Hold the button, wait one second, then speak.
YOU	"Mom, this is Sam."
WAIT	Let go of the button and listen for a reply.
YOU	"I'm at school. I'm OK. Heading to rally point 2. Over."
THEM	"Got it. See you there. Out."

- Keep it under 15 seconds. Use names and places, plain words, no codes.
- Hold the radio upright, 2–3 inches from your mouth, and speak normally.
- Say numbers and addresses twice. Let go of the button to hear the answer.

6 SAVE POWER

- Turn radios **off between check-ins** unless someone is assigned to listen.
- Use **low power** when you're close together, and high power only when you need it.
- Turn off key beeps, the backlight, scan and VOX (voice-activated talk).
- Carry spare batteries. Lithium AAs last longer and handle cold better than alkalines. Keep them in an inside pocket in cold weather.
- Phones: low-power mode, dim the screen, close apps, and text rather than call.
- Recharge from a car, power bank or solar panel while you can.

7 WHEN TO MOVE TO THE RALLY POINT

- ☐ Home is unsafe or damaged, or you can't get there.
- ☐ Officials tell you to evacuate.
- ☐ No contact after _____ check-ins, or by _____

Before you go, leave a note on the door saying where you went and when. Take your radio, spare batteries, water and this card.

8 CHECK-IN LOG

TIME	WHO	WHERE	STATUS: OK · HELP · MOVING

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