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

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.