

STAYING PREPARED:

In Case of Emergency- ICE Your Phone

A difficulty faced by emergency responders following a disaster or emergency is in how to notify relatives/interested parties, or obtain necessary information about a victim who cannot respond to questions. Even if the victim is carrying multiple forms of identification (like a Driver's License), those will not likely provide the information needed by the emergency responders. There is a special need to contact family or friends to inform them of the situation, and in many cases to obtain vital medical information about the victim which can enhance and speed up vital emergency care.

This concern over the years has evolved from carrying such information lists in a wallet or purse, or in wearing medical bracelets/necklaces with vital information engraved on them. A person should continue to maintain this information as in the past, but it is now recommended for all who carry a cell phone to use it as the indispensable lifeline between the emergency care and someone who may know vital information for their patient. The problem is with the multiple numbers stored in the electronic address book of a cell phone poses a challenge: which one of the numbers listed should be contacted to be of help to the emergency medical care professionals. The solution is the acronym I.C.E.; In Case of Emergency. It is easy to do. In front of the names of the people you want to designate as points of contact, type in ICE. For an example, an entry such as; ICE- Dad.

However, by doing so necessitates an agreement with the person you have designated as your ICE contact. Ensure the following:

- The person you designate has agreed to be your ICE contact
- Your ICE contacts have a list of people they should contact on your behalf (including workplace)
- Your ICE contacts are easily contacted at any time of the day or night
- Provide your ICE contacts with valuable information for communicating with others regarding your situation
- Your ICE contacts should be entrusted with critical medical information, such as the name and number of your personal physician, as well as medical conditions and current medications you are on which could affect medical treatment
- As you enter the ICE contact, prefix it the contact information as a priority for emergency contact; ICE1- Mom, ICE2- Brother, etc.

If you are under the age of 18, your primary ICE contact should be a parent or guardian, who is authorized to make medical decisions on your behalf. It is also advisable for you to contact your mobile service provider to discuss the ICE program. They will let you know how they support this effort, and may recommend how to properly enter in the ICE contact information based on the type of cell phone you have.

A key point for all first responders is to ensure the victim's cell phone accompanies the victim to the emergency care facility, because hospital staff will more likely have the need and time to use the ICE contacts for valuable information and notification.

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