

# Off The Grid Messaging Techniques

We must be prepared to get our messages out to people – especially vulnerable people downwind – even if they have no Internet access or telephone access.

We recommend that you use at least four such techniques to deliver the message to improve coverage. Special effort should be made to convey information to special needs and non-English speaking populations. Day care centers, schools, nursing homes, hospitals, shelters, and the like may need directed messaging. Also keep in mind that not all electronic or technology-based modes will be available during a disaster.

- No electricity means no printing for flyers
- Cell phone towers can be down
- Phone trees not available
- Radio reception limited to those with hand or battery powered radios
- Populations may be scattered, especially if there is an evacuation order in place

## **Here is a list of methods for this situation:**

∴ **Sandwich Boards** – weather conditions can be a factor (wind, rain) so design accordingly

∴ **Reverse 911/Code Red:** Usually used for emergency/life threatening emergencies only.

∴ **Cable TV and Public TV Station Warning Banners over TV Programs:** Similar to what is used for school delay information.

∴ **Bullhorn and Car**

∴ **Town Hall Meetings**

∴ **Flyers on bulletin boards**

- Post office
- Entrance stations
- Markets
- Community/Recreation centers
- Senior centers
- Transit stations
- Shelters

- Disaster Assistance Centers
- Large businesses in area

∴ **Fax and/or email via Tourism Department or Chamber of Commerce**

- Hotels
- B & B's
- Restaurants
- Local attractions

∴ **Insert simple message into rumor mill** (the simpler, the less likely it will be distorted.)

∴ **Dedicated Message Line:** When emergency events occur, information is recorded on the line so that the community can call to receive updates. When there are no emergencies, the line may have a standard recorded message about community information.

∴ **Radio Scanners:** Purposefully broadcasting a public service message over frequently scanned public service frequencies, i.e., Sheriff Dispatch, Fire Dispatch, and Ambulance Dispatch. Usually only considered for extreme events.

∴ **Cal-Trans Highway Signs:** Located on roadways and in affected communities.

∴ **Ham Radios:** Coordinating with HAM Radio groups prior to emergencies can help establish a plan to deploy HAM Radio experts and messages when needed. These can also be incorporated into the emergency operations center with other communication/interoperability modalities.

∴ **Phone Tree:** One person calls two people, two people call four people, and so on. This should be set up in advance to be most effective with an option to cover for those not home or available to continue the tree.

- Community groups and clubs
- Schools
- Faith centers

∴ **Flyers for students to take home:** This can be slow but effective, and can also provide important information to non-English speaking households.

∴ **Door-to-Door**

- First Responders
- Police Auxiliary
- Red Cross volunteers

- ∴ **Radio PSAs:** Public radio stations will convey emergency information when requested.
- ∴ **Fax Blast:** Pre-programmed fax numbers work well as an avenue to disseminate messages over a large group.
- ∴ **Via City/County Government Agencies:** Provide the information to government employees and ask that they share the information with as many people as possible (friends, family, acquaintances) – again, the message must be simple to avoid twisting the information into misinformation.
- ∴ **Dedicated emergency radio frequency (AM/FM):** Public must be pre-educated and/or signage displayed throughout the affected area.
- ∴ **Text message blast:** Sending text message over cell phone numbers. More and more large employers and college campuses are using this outlet.
- ∴ **Electronic Message Boards:** Used at schools, fairgrounds, stadiums, etc.
- ∴ **Info at road closures:** Can be verbal or by posted signs or flyers.