



Communication Plan Instructions

Youth should possess some type of communication “tool” (two-way radios, cell phone, etc.) that enables them to communicate with an adult in case of emergency and/or for “checking in”. Youth must be trained to use this equipment under safe conditions and to never use it when it would be a hazardous distraction.

I. What youth need to know

1. Who to contact in case of emergency
2. What type of incidents and issues need to be reported
3. What time to check-in
4. How to use the communication equipment, ensuring it is fully charged and working properly before each use
5. When not to use the communication equipment

II. What adults need to know

1. Which youth/workers they are responsible for
2. Where each person is going, routes to/from the worksite and when they will return
3. What type of job each person is doing
4. When each person will check-in
5. How to use the communication equipment, ensuring it is fully charged and working properly before each use
6. When not to use the communication equipment
7. When youth was last trained/refreshed on the communication plan

III. Type of Tool: Consider location and available resources before deciding on type of tool

1. Cell Phones:
 - i. Do both youth and supervising adult have cell phones?
 - ii. Is the signal strong enough in all areas where youth and adult will be working?
 - iii. Are both youth and adult familiar with use of cell phone?
 - iv. Are appropriate numbers entered into phones for easy access?
2. Two-way Radios
 - i. Will the area where youth is working be within range of supervising adult?
 - ii. Does the youth know how to use the radio, which channel to use, etc.?
 - iii. Will equipment be used that interferes with the signal?
3. Other tools which are sometimes used, but may be less effective, are emergency whistles, air horns, bull horns, etc.

IV. Provide training

1. Rules for using communication tool (examples)
 - i. Never use tools when it would be a hazardous distraction (operating equipment)
 - ii. If contacted while working, shut down all equipment, leave animal areas/work areas, etc., before answering
 - iii. Do not use communication tools for purposes other than check-ins and emergencies to avoid running batteries down

2. Emergency Response Plan/Procedures
 - i. What types of incidents youth may encounter
 1. Weather, e.g. tornados, severe storms, hurricanes, heat exhaustion, etc.
 2. Injuries
 3. Fire
 4. Other
 - ii. What youth should do in the event of an incident (their role)
 - iii. Who youth should contact if there is an emergency and how, including a back-up person
 - iv. Where is the meeting place (if applicable)
3. What is the procedure if check-in times are missed (examples)
 - i. First check-in missed: adult contacts youth via communication tool
 - ii. Second check-in missed: adult goes to worksite to physically check on youth
4. What to do if communication fails (batteries dead, cell tower down, etc.), examples:
 - i. Adult goes to worksite to check on youth
 - ii. Determine a place to meet after ___ missed check-in(s) or in emergencies
5. When not to use communication tools (examples):
 - i. When driving or operating equipment
 - ii. When working near or with equipment with moving parts
 - iii. When working around animals
 - iv. Any time youth is working or in a worksite
6. Document everything
 - i. Written policies/procedures/plans for
 1. Emergency Response
 2. Communication Plan
 3. Incident Reports
 - ii. Training
 1. Written training policies and materials – with regular review
 2. Document when training is done and have employee(s) sign off
 3. Re-train regularly or whenever anything is new or changes occur

V. Distributing your communication plan

1. Include it in written orientation materials
2. Periodically send out reminder/refresher emails and provide refresher training
3. Post in areas frequented by employees