



Delivery Channels

Channels for disseminating and delivering the messages are varied and your selection of which ones to use will depend on availability, access, and how well they reach your different populations. Some methods to consider include:

- Television, in particular, is considered the preferred medium among all populations for receiving emergency information such as weather alerts and news about disease outbreaks and prevention.
- The ethnic media community is usually underestimated. Few communication plans emphasize ethnic media, although one in four adults use ethnic media daily¹⁰. Even when members of an intended audience have access to the mainstream media, they are far more responsive to messages delivered by a person from a similar cultural or ethnic group. Most organizational communication plans do not include in-depth use of ethnic media.
- Internet access is an important source of information for many in America. Even people who are homeless have access at public libraries and regularly use the Internet for information. Many state government websites have been translated and are available in languages other than English. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, electronic messaging is an invaluable communication tool. Blogging and other types of online bulletin boards with direct posting to an electronic network community at large provide additional dissemination of underutilized possibilities. Also consider podcasting as an information dissemination channel for those who are visually impaired or those who prefer to listen to, rather than read, information.
- The use of cell phone/text messaging technology has dramatically increased. Text messaging is a main access point for young people and is a resource for the people in deaf and hard of hearing communities. Newer cell phones also allow for Internet access.
- Reverse 911 is a mechanized phone system technology that can dial and deliver a pre-recorded message to homes with phones in a particular jurisdiction. Some form of it is currently used in many communities to give neighborhood announcements and crime alerts. It is not available in all areas of the country.
- Telephone calling trees are effective ways to reach remote rural populations. Often, these trees are self-initiated by residents of these areas. During blizzards, for example, rural neighbors will call or use ham radios to check on each other.
- 2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that, where available, is answered by live operators and referral specialists who can connect people with important community services and volunteer opportunities. As the public becomes more and more familiar with using 2-1-1, they might think to call this number in an emergency. Both telephone 2-1-1 and the 2-1-1 website www.211.org might be available to assist with providing public health information, tailored by location for your community. Services that are offered through 2-1-1 will vary from community to community, so contact your local 2-1-1 to see what capabilities are available in your jurisdiction.



When Mainstream Media is Not an Option

Channels for delivering the messages are varied and will depend on availability, access, and how well they reach your populations. In certain emergencies, a loss of power will severely limit options.

Delivery channels, when the electricity has not been affected or limited, can include:

- Television/mass media (radio, newspaper)
- Ethnic media
- Podcast
- Internet
- Radio
- Satellite radio
- COIN
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR)
- 2-1-1 website: www.211.org

Delivery channels during a blackout or when electricity is not available to all areas could include:

- Cell phone/text messaging
- Battery-powered radio
- Reverse 911
- Battery-powered walkie talkies
- 2-1-1 telephone
- Ham radio networks
- Telephone calling trees/networks (using landline phones that do not require electricity)

Plans for message delivery should be set up in advance of a disaster so that a telephone calling tree is available when disaster strikes.

Other tactics for reaching at-risk populations include:

- Door-to-door information distribution including door hangers and pamphlets
- Information distribution to a pre-determined emergency information point (churches, libraries, grocery stores, post offices, schools, restaurants, markets)
- Peer ambassadors designated to help neighbors receive information
- Police alerts

Tools for reaching at-risk populations include:

- Picture books
- Braille and alternative language handouts
- Closed-captioned videos
- Audiotapes

¹⁰New America Media. Ethnic Media in America: The Giant Hidden in Plain Sight, June 2005.
http://www.ncmonline.com/polls/full_em_poll.pdf