

# THERE'S MORE TO A TEXT

If a disaster strikes, phone lines may be jammed or internet access unavailable. How will you relay important information or get in touch with loved ones?

## TEXTING MAY BE THE ANSWER

This service is found on nearly all mobile phones, and text messages can find their way through crowded airwaves. They are often the most reliable way to communicate during and after a disaster.

## WHY IT WORKS

When you make a call on a cell phone, two channels need to open up on a cell tower: one for you to talk and one to listen to the person you are calling. When cell towers are damaged or inoperable, space is at a premium. Text messaging sends only a short packet of information when space becomes available. The service has proven its worth in several disasters, including Hurricane Katrina, the Japanese earthquake and tsunami, and the Joplin, Missouri tornado of 2011.

## HOW TO DO IT

1. In menu, select the "Messages" or "SMS" (which stands for "short messaging service") icon. The labeling may vary for different phones.
2. Select the "Create New Message" option.
  - a. For cell phones with only number buttons, hitting a number key will type out the first letter that it corresponds with (e.g., 2 accesses ABC, so hitting the 2 key once will type out an A). To type a B or C, you have to hit the 2 key twice quickly or three times quickly, respectively.
  - b. Other phones have either physical or virtual keyboards. For those phones, the process is easier.

Simply type out the message either on the physical keyboard or press the letter buttons on the screen to compose your message.

3. Hit the send button and it's on its way. This is a crucial feature that might save your life.

## EXAMPLE

If you want to type "Hi"

- hit the 4 key twice quickly
- pause
- then hit the 4 key three times



## NEED HELP?

For teenagers, texting is a popular way to communicate. Ask a younger person in your life, in your family, at your church or workplace to teach you how to text.

If you would like help from your cell phone carrier, here is a list of the largest companies and how to reach them:

### VERIZON

[www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com)  
800-922-0204

### AT&T

[www.att.com/wireless](http://www.att.com/wireless)  
800-331-0500

### SPRINT NEXTEL

[www.sprint.com](http://www.sprint.com)  
866-866-7509

### T-MOBILE

[www.t-mobile.com](http://www.t-mobile.com)  
800-866-2453

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Pinellas County Emergency Management  
727-464-3800  
[www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency)

Pinellas Park High School  
First Responder Program  
[firstresponders.pcsb.org](http://firstresponders.pcsb.org)

