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Don't forget to register electronics, set up ICE

I urge every reader to set up your ICE contact on your mobile phone and iPod as well as to register your portable electronics. This is influenced by a serious accident that occurred to a relative a few weeks ago. Without providing too much detail, this person was struck by a car while jogging one morning. All that was on this person was their iPod.

The injuries were so severe that this person was unconscious and remains so weeks after the accident. During the first 30-plus hours following the accident, this person remained unidentified because they had no ID, only their iPod on their person. Through some truly smart thinking a nurse used this person's iPod serial number to track down their identity and find their family.

While we all tend to carry our driver's license or other form of identification on us most of the time, there are times when that may not be the case, like when you are out exercising. I know that myself, I nearly always have my mobile phone or iPod with me. So, if you have not registered your iPod, do it right now, before you forget. It could just save your life.

As well, you should set up your ICE contact on both your iPod and on your mobile phone. I checked my kids' and my wife's phones and iPods immediately and our oldest had it set up, but we set it up on the others. What is ICE? If you're not familiar with it, get familiar and teach it to anyone you know. We even made this an agenda item for our staff meeting today. I encourage you to do the same.

ICE stands for "In Case of Emergency." On many mobile phones it is a built in feature. What's unique about ICE is that it will work whether or not the phone is locked. More and more people are enabling the lock features of their phones for security and to prevent unauthorized use.

In short, the ICE contact allows you to set up emergency contact names and numbers, as well as critical information like medicines you take, conditions you have, etc., that will be accessible to anyone who finds your device, regardless of whether you have enabled security or not.

On your iPod, you can set up an ICE note. If you have never used the notes feature on your iPod, go to Extras and select Notes and follow the instructions to set up your ICE note. It's very easy to do.

On smartphones, there are even more powerful ways to set up ICE. Both the iPhone and Blackberry have ICE applications available. For the iPhone, just search the App Store for an ICE application. There are a few available and all address the need.

On the Blackberry, you can use an application, just like on the iPhone, called ICE that is available at the Blackberry App World. It provides the following features: One button calling

of emergency contact; multiple contacts in order of priority; fully editable entries; covers medications and allergies; summary for quick access in one button; private to your phone, no online access.

Some Blackberry users also have built in Security Options for this.

If you have a Windows Mobile phone, you can set your owner information to display on power up, even if the device is locked. You can use the note section of the owner information to put extended instructions and create your own ICE.

Lastly, no matter what device you use, I recommend creating an extensive ICE contact record in Outlook or whatever other contact application you may be using to sync your contacts with your mobile device. You can use the built-in fields to enter your work and home telephone numbers and then the notes section to enter your extended contact priorities and other important medical information.

If your device is accessible, this information will be critical to first responders. If you lock your device and are part of a corporate network, your IT administrators will be able to access this contact record and relay this critical information in a timely manner.

Take the time and do this now so you don't forget. Most importantly, I hope you never need to have this information used on your behalf. As I like to believe, it's far better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it.

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