FICTIONAL TABLETOP / OPTIONAL 10-MINUTE PRACTICE

Who gets the message?

Alex and Sam are safely in different places. Robin is their agreed out-of-town contact. No one is in danger. Work out how a short check-in reaches everyone when one part of the plan is unavailable.

Discuss only. Do not call emergency services, send test alerts or share real contact details. Anyone can pass. An adult facilitates household practice; use local official instructions in a real emergency.

PLAY IN THREE STEPS

1. Choose who reads Alex, Sam and Robin. One person can cover more than one role.
2. Read one card. Say the next contact attempt, what the message needs, and how you will know it arrived.
3. Turn over one more card. Change the plan if needed. Finish with one update on page 2.

A / CALLS DO NOT CONNECT

Alex can send a text, but voice calls do not connect. What brief check-in could Alex send to the agreed contact? What would count as a reply?

B / ONE PHONE IS FLAT

Sam cannot use a phone. Which paper copy or agreed helper could Sam use? Where would Sam find the information without relying on that phone?

C / THE USUAL CONTACT IS UNAVAILABLE

Robin does not answer. What backup contact or next step was agreed beforehand? How would Alex and Sam learn the same update?

D / TWO COPIES DISAGREE

A printed contact card is older than the household plan. Who checks the details, dates the revision and replaces the copies that need updating?

Original exercise by Honest Little Apps. Free to print and share intact with credit.

KEEP THE DECISIONS / REVIEW TOGETHER

Make one useful change

There is no winning score and no guaranteed delivery method. The useful result is a shared next step, a way to confirm a message arrived, and a current copy people can find.

THE CONTACT LADDER

1 FIRST ATTEMPT

Agreed contact role and preferred channel:

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2 IF UNAVAILABLE

Backup contact or next agreed step:

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3 PAPER / OFFLINE COPY

Where a current copy can be found without this phone:

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4 CLOSE THE LOOP

What reply confirms receipt, and who passes on the update:

ONE UPDATE BEFORE YOU FINISH

Our next change: _____

Person who will check it: _____ Review date: _____

FACILITATOR NOTES

A: Keep the message brief; a sent message is not a confirmed reply. B: Find a usable paper copy or agreed support person. C: Agree the backup in advance rather than assuming everyone knows it. D: Check details with the people concerned and date replacement copies. These are discussion prompts, not emergency procedures.

Planning basis: Public Safety Canada, Make an emergency plan, steps 2 and 7: meeting places, household contacts and an out-of-town contact. Guidance checked November 5, 2026. This independent exercise is not a government publication.

Read the official planning form



Optional continuation: Family Ready on iPhone

Free Emergency Card, household plan and Snapshot PDF. Optional Plus adds sharing and extra packs. This paper exercise does not sync to the app.

https://apps.apple.com/us/app/family-ready-emergency-plan/id6792019825

Free guide and text alternative: open the original challenge page, section "Tabletop".

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