

BUSINESSSAFE

BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.

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BusinessSafe Highlight – Emergency Communications

There are many aspects to the communications sector that are vital to the safety of Florida businesses. One example is emergency communications systems, which are critical to transmit information that first responders rely on during a crisis. First responders' ability to communicate must be reliable and time sensitive to help minimize the risk to life, property and recovery during emergency situations. However, emergency communications can sometimes be compromised. As a result, first responders will likely have difficulty determining where to respond, what to expect and other important details of a situation. Florida residents and business owners should be prepared with alternative contact methods if emergency communications are compromised.

Instances of Compromise

Examples of ways emergency communications have been compromised include the following:

- Police in the Uvalde, Texas school district may have [lacked proper radio communication](#) on the day of the Robb Elementary School shooting. An emergency management official stated that the radio system was implemented over 20 years prior to the shooting and was not designed to work well inside dense structures.
- Firefighters in Warrensville Heights, Ohio [arrived to the wrong address](#) after faulty information sharing between first responders and dispatch. Instead of using computer automated systems to share correct addresses, the fire department wrote the wrong address on paper and arrived to the incorrect location.
- Task force members in Portland, Oregon [experienced problems with their radios](#) in the moments leading up to a fatal shooting, causing communication difficulties within the team. The radio issues caused confusion during the decision to attempt the arrest because of the team's leader's inability to communicate with other members.
- During the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, Broward Sheriff's Office and Coral Springs Police Department had [trouble with radio communication](#) during the disaster. The calls coming from Parkland were directed to Coral Springs, then to Broward Sheriff's Office, losing crucial time.



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Alternative Methods of Communication

Although calling your local law enforcement or 911 should always be the primary means of reporting emergency situations, it is always wise to have alternative methods of communication available during an emergency. Some examples include:

- SMS messages to alert key contacts of any potential emergency;
- Emergency notification options for internal communication systems that are regularly used to share information within organizations;
- Social media posts to quickly communicate with both internal and external stakeholders during a disaster, if internet access is available; and
- CB radio or ham radio, which may be the only means of communication during the worst of disasters. No license is required and they are useful for long-range radio communication.

How to Report

- In the event of an emergency, dial 911.
- "If You See Something, Say Something" - Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency, on the FDLE website using Florida's "See Something, Say Something" Tool Kit or by calling 1-855-FLA-SAFE.

Resources

- The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency ([CISA](#)) is an excellent resource for emergency communications.
- Community Emergency Response Team ([CERT](#)) provides information on methods of communications during an emergency.



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