

ICE IN YOUR MOBILE PHONE

The original concept, conceived by Cambridge paramedic Bob Brotchie, involved putting the acronym ICE in front of your designated emergency contact. The idea is that you store the word "ICE" in your mobile phone address book, and against it enter the number of the person you would want to be contacted "In Case of Emergency". In an emergency situation, ambulance and hospital staff will then be able to quickly find out who your next of kin are and be able to contact them. It's as simple as that, and for more than one contact name you can use ICE1, ICE2, ICE3 etc. Follow these hints to get the best out of ICE:

- Make sure the person whose name and number you are giving has agreed to be your ICE partner
- Make sure your ICE partner has a list of people they should contact on your behalf - including your place of work
- Make sure your ICE person's number is one that's easy to contact, for example a home number could be useless in an emergency if the person works full time
- Make sure your ICE partner knows about any medical conditions that could affect your emergency treatment - for example allergies or current medication
- Make sure if you are under 18, your ICE partner is a parent or guardian authorized to make decisions on your behalf - for example if you need a life or death operation
- Should your preferred contact be deaf, then type ICETEXT, then the name of your contact before saving the number

Contrary to several chain e-mail warnings, ICE is not something that Paramedics will rush to look for the instant they arrive at an emergency, and is certainly not required in order for Torrance Fire Department Paramedics to provide quick, focused and compassionate emergency care.

The best advice: Add ICE to your cell phone only after you've affixed similar information to (or near) the official photo identification you routinely carry in your wallet.

Why? With so many types and brands of wireless phones, it can take precious minutes to learn how to access a phone's directory. Many wireless devices are also found to be locked, damaged or have discharged batteries following an incident, rendering ICE unusable.

Please do encourage your interested friends and colleagues to make an ICE entry in their cell phone, especially if it will give them peace of mind - but not at the expense of written emergency contact and medical information.

From the Torrance Fire Department Website, <http://www.tornet.com/TFD>