

Phone's ICE can save your life

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Editor:

Many times today, we are reminded of the little ways that modern technology can make our lives better. I was recently involved in an incident that really drove home the importance of one of these ways.

The recent incident involved a person from out of town. This individual suffered from a medical emergency that did not allow him to communicate anything with those attempting to provide him medical care. The phone number on his business card was a number directly to his desk, and since he was not there, the call went directly to voicemail.

When attempting to assess the condition and gather what little information there was, EMTs from the Fennimore Rescue Squad alertly made certain to gather the person's cell phone. Although the EMTs were too busy caring for the patient on the trip to the hospital to investigate further, at the hospital the EMTs retrieved the person's phone and began looking for their ICE information.

For those who aren't familiar, ICE stands for In Case of Emergency, an idea that has been circulating for years. You simply enter the letters ICE ahead of the name of your emergency contact, so should there be an emergency, of a sort similar to this one, others may use your phone to contact your family or friends. You may even choose to enter multiple ICE contacts, in case your primary contact cannot be reached.

When I heard that others around us did not know what these EMTs were looking for and questioned their activities, I felt compelled to write this. In our modern society most of us are at one time or another far from home, where people don't know us. Even if we do not travel alone, in an emergency, our travel companions may not be able to answer questions either (an important thing to remember when you are deciding who to enter for ICE contacts). We may also be separated from them.

In the situation above a simple phone call to the man's ICE contact revealed some basic medical history information and the name of his regular doctor, who was able to provide more detailed information. This information is essential for health care workers to provide the proper care as quickly as possible. I meet many people each day in my work and social activities, but it is a rare occurrence to meet someone who does not have a cell phone on them or immediately available.

People will leave home and forget all kinds of things but rarely do they forget their cell phone. If you do not already, please take a few moments and set up ICE contacts in your phone, it may very well save your life some day.

Chief Rick Kreul
Fennimore EMS