

Mobile Phone Series: ICE – In Case of Emergency

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1. What is ICE?

As the title indicates **ICE** stands for in **C**ase of **E**mergency

At its simplest (and no cost), all ICE involves is adding an emergency contact number to your Mobile Phones Stored Numbers and labelling it ICE

At its most sophisticated ICE requires a subscription to an **ICE Service Provider** who holds all your emergency contacts and Medical Details on a Database and provides a Membership Card and other Items (Key Fobs etc) plus an ICE Contact Number for your phone.

ICE is **not**, in any of its forms a total solution, but it should be considered as providing a useful source of information to the emergency services, in the event of an Accident, or Incident and therefore worth doing.

2, ICE and Hoax Emails

There have been at various time email chains which vary from the uninformed spreading rumours causing 'Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt' over ICE, to what can only be described as simply malicious attacks on the ICE Concept. **These have all been proven to be hoaxes**, but unfortunately some people have believed the content of these emails and have removed ICE from their Mobile Phone.

Most of these started during the summer of 2005, but like most rumours and other types of negative emails, now have a 'life of their own' and continue to reappear in people's inboxes every now and again..

For details of the Hoaxes Identified so far see [Snopes - In Case of Emergency](#)

Scroll down two thirds of the page to see samples of the Hoax emails.

3. Adding an In Case of Emergency (ICE) Number to your Mobile

If you are involved in an incident, or accident you may not be in a position to tell the Emergency Services your Next of Kin, or any Special Medical Needs. Your Mobile Phone can help them and you, if you store your Next of Kin Telephone Number as **ICE** and follow these simple guidelines.

- Make sure the person whose name and number you are giving has agreed to be your ICE partner
- Make sure your ICE partner knows your blood group and any medical conditions that could affect your emergency treatment - for example allergies or current medication
- 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 partners 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 (Most Mobiles allow multiple Numbers for a single contact so use this facility to enter all the numbers your ICE Partner Uses)
- Make sure if you are under 18, your ICE partner is a parent or guardian authorised to make decision 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
- Label the stored Number as **ICE**, or **ICE – Name** (e.g. ICE- Sarah)

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4. Multiple ICE Contacts

Companies Offering ICE Contact as a Commercial Service provide 24x7 Coverage, but using a single person as your ICE Partner has obvious pitfalls. As a workaround and subject to each person agreeing to be an ICE Partner for you, create additional ICE contacts using the guidelines above and label each one as ICE and a number (e.g. **ICE2**, **ICE3**, etc, or **ICE2 – Parents**, **ICE3 – Diane**, etc).

5. How to Avoid Losing Caller ID

When storing your ICE Number(s) add the * (star) symbol to the end of each number e.g. instead of 123456, enter 123456*

It will still work and will stop the phone being confused over the Caller ID

6. Why ICE is NOT a Complete Solution

- a) The emergency services cannot use your Mobile, for example::
 - It is Password Protected – In Which Case basic **ICE** is **NOT** for **you**, but see section 6
 - It was broken in the Accident/Accident
 - It is no longer on your Person and they haven't spotted it
 - You forgot it, Left in the Car/Office/House etc.

- b) The emergency services can use your Mobile but, for example:
 - Your Contact(s) unavailable because their involved in the same Accident/Incident
 - Your Contact(s) unavailable because their all at an event /party/ etc with Mobiles Off
 - Your Contact (s)have changed their Telephone Numbers and you haven't updated your ICE List
 - Your in a Country where the ICE Concept is not known, or is not in general use, so they don't see the significance of the ICE Entry in your Address Book

Because in these situations time is important, it is vital those with a medical condition must ensure they carry a card detailing the problem and criteria for emergency treatment. Outside this special case, most of us do carry ID which will help the Emergency Services, for example

- National Identity Cards (not all Countries)
- Passport (Usually only carried when abroad)
- Drivers Licence
- Employee ID/Security Cards
- Key Security Tags
- Printed Address Books
- Letters, or Other Documents with our name on and probably address

But the above will take possibly valuable time, so I suggest you review what ID you routinely carry in your Wallet, Purse, or Handbag

There are some sites that attempt to mitigate the shortfalls outlined above, without resorting to a Subscription Service, although very US centric (and a little too self-centred for my taste): [ICE4Safety](#), does have templates and other useful documents and tips which can be adapted for other countries.

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7. Why Use an ICE Subscription Service

ICE started as a ground roots initiative and when initially Subscription based ICE Service Providers first appeared, I must admit I was concerned over what appeared to be the Commercialization of the concept. However there are considerable benefits in using a **good** provider, because they mitigate most of shortfalls covered in section 6.

- a) Guaranteed 24x7x365 Coverage
- b) Their Database Contains all the information the Emergency Services need
- c) They provide a Membership Card and other Personalised Items (Key fobs etc) with their number and your membership number.
- d) They offer family Plans as well as individual cover
- e) They in the main offer a selection of reasonably priced plans.

If you decide a Subscription Service is your ICE Option then please take time to research the one that is best for your purposes. Don't just pick the first that appears in your Search Engine, or Directory.

However it would be churlish not to mention [ICE Contact](#) (Australia, UK, and USA) which is closely associated with the original campaign,

There are also benefits for companies which employ people working alone, either in country, or abroad. Again whilst I advise that doing research on what is available and most suits a particular corporate requirement is important, I do suggest that as part of that research a check is made on what is offered by: [Ice Global – Emergency Notification Com](#)

8. ICE History and Background

The **ICE number** is the brainchild of British paramedic Bob Brotchie, employed by the East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust. In the course of his experience, Brotchie had discovered that, though the majority of accident victims carry no next of kin details, over 80% carry a mobile phone. Reflecting on some difficult situations he had dealt with, where victims were unable to speak through injury, it occurred to him that a uniform approach for identifying an emergency contact on a mobile phone would make life easier for everyone. As well as the quick identification of a contact, emergency services could be sure that the number related to a person who the accident victim would want to be contacted in such a situation, someone who could for instance give consent for emergency treatment or provide vital information about an individual's medical history.

Although **Bob Brotchie** launched the campaign to promote the concept of **ICE numbers**, backed by mobile phone company **Vodafone** and endorsed by Falklands War veteran **Simon Weston**, in April 2005. It wasn't until the terrorist attacks in London on the 7th July 2005, that the idea of **ICE numbers** really began to take off, rapidly spreading across to the USA, Australia, and throughout the world (around 44 countries are ICE aware to a greater or lesser degree). Global exposure of the concept occurred practically overnight, with international media coverage coupled with a 'grass roots based', but large-scale e-mail campaign helping to spread the word.

Whilst the original concept evolved around a Number Stored on a Mobile Phone, it has evolved and is now a package measures of to how a person, family, can prepare for an incapacitating accident, or incident with ICE Cards, Stickers – for Cars, Phones and other Personal Items, Key Fobs, Wristbands, with the ICE Number stored on a Mobile Phone just another element. But it all started with one man being concerned with how he could improve victim identification and contact next of kin.

Douglas Holland 09th March 2008

If you have any comments please: