

Technology has made it easier than ever to prepare for emergencies. But technology can be unreliable during emergency circumstances if you haven't planned to keep your gadgets protected and powered up. Here are some tips to make sure that you are tech ready:

- Download the Ready Georgia app to keep a copy of your family emergency plan at your fingertips. The app will also help you track which emergency supplies you need to purchase for your Ready kit.
- Use text messages, social media and email to connect with friends and family during emergencies.
 - Mobile networks can become overwhelmed during emergencies, making it difficult to place and receive phone calls. Text messages require less bandwidth, which means they are able to be transmitted more reliably during times when many people are trying to use their mobile phones at the same time.
 - Social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter can also be an effective way to update family and friends during emergencies. Facebook's Safety Check feature allows users to easily post a status update indicated that they are safe during a time of disaster.
- If a disaster impacts your area, let your family and friends know you're OK while keeping cell phone lines open for emergency calls by registering on the [American Red Cross Safe and Well](#) website. After registering, users select a message to let family and friends know they're OK. Concerned family and friends can search this list to find the first name, last name, an "as of date" and the "safe and well" message.
- Have an emergency charging option for your phone and other mobile devices. Smartphones have become a vital tool to receive emergency alerts and warnings, so it's important to make sure you can keep them powered up in an emergency.
 - At home: Prior to severe weather, make sure that all of your electronic devices are fully charged. If the power goes out, preserve battery power by minimizing device use. Keep a back-up power source on hand to recharge your phone so that you can stay connected even during an extended power outage.
 - In your car: Keep a portable phone charger in your vehicle at all times, and consider purchasing a back-up power supply to keep in your vehicle as well.
- Store important documents in a secure, password-protected jump drive or in the cloud.
 - There are a number of productivity apps for mobile devices that make this easier than ever; using your phone's camera as a scanning device. Capture electronic versions of important documents such as insurance policies and identification documents.
 - Back-up your computer to protect photos and other personally important electronic documents.
 - Scan old photos to protect them from loss.
- Sign up for Direct Deposit and electronic banking through your financial institution so you can access your payroll funds and make electronic payments wherever you are. Federal benefit recipients can sign up by calling 800.333.1795 or at [GoDirect.org](#).