



New Red Cross Emergency Communications Released by Military Effective June 13

Service members can now use one number to initiate emergency communication

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As part of an ongoing effort to better serve the military community, the American Red Cross today announced that it will move to a single telephone number for its emergency communication services.

Beginning June 13, 2011, at 8:00 a.m. EDT, all military members and their families can use one number- 877-272-7337 (U.S. Toll Free) to send an urgent message to a service member.

The change means that all military members and their families can use this single number to initiate an emergency communication, regardless of where they live. In the past, community-based military or families living outside an installation needed to remember the phone number for their local Red Cross chapters for emergency communications, while those living on a military installation used the 877-272-7337 number.

"An emergency situation can be a very stressful time for a military family, and having just one common telephone number to remember can make a difficult situation a little easier," said Sherri Brown, Senior Vice President for Service to the Armed Forces. "U.S. military personnel and their families can remain confident that the Red Cross will be there to keep them connected when there is a crisis at home."

A call to 877-272-7337 allows Red Cross emergency communications services to put military personnel in touch with their families following the death or serious illness of an immediate

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family member, the birth of a service member's child or grandchild or when a family faces other emergencies. Additional Red Cross services such as case management and emergency financial assistance also are available. For those stationed overseas, the three options for calling will remain the same: calling 877-272-7337 direct, accessing the number through a military operator, or calling the local Red Cross station.

"The Red Cross has always been there for us," said Mr. Robert L. Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy. "It's critically important to our men and women serving away from home that their families know whom to call in the event of an emergency. The Red Cross is now making it even easier to make that call."

The Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program provides assistance to more than 2 million service members and many of the nation's 24 million veterans. The Red Cross provides emergency communications linking service members with their families during time of crisis; comfort and care in military and veterans medical facilities; access to financial assistance in partnership with the military aid societies; information and referral and assistance to veterans.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization - not a government agency - and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.