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TECHNOLOGY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Christine Seymour

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: Good morning. For the past two years, I have been working on a project, CEPIN, Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network. It was on a grant from the Department of Homeland Security. Our team that served four regions in the country worked with subject matter experts and Louisiana State University, who are Homeland Security training partners, to develop a really important course. This is an 8 hour course that's called "Emergency Responders and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities: Taking the First Steps to Emergency Preparedness To be honest with you, two years ago I didn't know squat about emergency preparedness. I wanted to do this job, and I have been learning so much.

How many of you have an emergency kit in your home? (Show of hands) Three... Four! Wow. That's about 40% here today. That's pretty good. How many of you can use a telephone? (Show of hands) How many of you can hear on the telephone? (Show of hands).

Okay. So what we're going to look at today is emergency information. Where does it come from? How does it get out? How can we get it and how can we make calls when we need help?

Because technology is changing every day, sometimes the emergency programs can't keep up with the technology change and you may have a device that you think is going to work for you and it won't. Or you may have something that you think doesn't work and it will. That's what we're going to explore today.

First we're going to talk about the information sources. There are four steps to information being disseminated. The first one is NOAA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. That is the top weather resource in the world. The second one is the Emergency Alert System. That's the system initiated by the president to disseminate emergency information that the President deems emergencies. Thirdly, the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, is the party that makes the rules enduring that all the people with special needs are also getting the information. And lastly of course your local emergency management is the one that's going to send the help out to you.

We're going to talk about making 911 calls. When you make one, what happens? Where does it go? Who gets it? What do they do?

Are wireless and 911 compatible? Can we use our cell phones, our pagers, our portable TTYs? Can we? We'll find out. Using TTYs to dial 911. There's a lot of new technology. IP relay and video relay, can we use them or not? What's the best way to make sure when I call 911 that they're going to find me and be able to send out the right people? We're going to talk about the technology for us to get and send emergency information.

So the information resources start out with NOAA. NOAA is a federal agency focused on the conditions of the ocean and the atmosphere. They broadcast warnings and watches and forecasts and other hazards 24 hours a day using a nationwide networks of radios. How many of you can listen to a radio and understand what they're saying? (Show of hands) A couple. Not many. We'll talk about why this radio will work for you.

Working with the Federal Communications Commission and the Emergency Alert System, a NOAA weather radio is an "all hazards." That means that through NOAA, the weather radio sends out the weather hazards and through EAS, the Emergency Alert System, it sends out other hazards, as in biohazards, as in terrorist attacks, as in amber alerts, and all kinds of other things. It's your single source, the most comprehensive place to get all hazard alert warning information.

Now, the EAS has a nationwide broadcast system in place for natural disasters and other large scale disasters. It is required to broadcast alerts, and messages for national security emergencies initiated by the President.

This is the federal protocol for sending out emergency alerts! From the EAS, the NOAA system, the emergency information goes out to your local authority. The EAS gives the local emergency responders the authority also to demonstrate or to send information out through this system. While the initial system is set up for the President to send out messages, it also gives the authority to a local agency to use that system if they don't have their own. NOAA tells us when there's a hazard; EAS tells us when something else is happening and the local emergency alerting tells you what's going on in your place.

Next comes the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission. How many of you know what the FCC does? (No hands raised) The FCC is responsible for the rule making for captioning. The FCC is responsible for the rule making to make sure that information that goes out is accessible. The FCC has several requirements to meet the needs of the people with emergencies. If there's any information intended to protect the health, safety, and property, that information must be accessible. That ruling applies to all local broadcasters, cable operators, satellite television providers. If crawls or scrolls are provided in regular programming, we must be able to read those. What about someone who can't see? They must also make a tone. So if an emergency news broadcast comes on and they're either captioning or they're scrolling the information so those of us who can't understand the TV are able to read it, they also have to sound a tone that allows a person who can't see to know that emergency information is being broadcast.

Now about 911 calls. 911 is the official emergency number in the United States and Canada. The calls are processed through what we call a PSAP, public safety answering point. When you call 911, your call goes to the PSAP, who takes your information, passes it on to the appropriate responding agency, and sends them out to take care of you. You've got a fire, they're going to send the firefighters. If you got a burglar in the basement, they're going to send a cop. If you have a medical emergency, you get fire and medical emergency staff.

The basic, very first 911 systems connected you to an operator to whom you had to give your name, address, where you were and what the emergency was. Extended 911, E-9-1-1, is used nationwide although there may still be some rural areas that use only the basic 911. Extended 911 is the system where when you call, your landline telephone that has a plug into a jack in your wall, your office, or wherever you're calling from, has the location information of where you're calling from. This information will pop up on the screen at the PSAP center. That way, if you are unable to communicate where you are, they can find you. They can also cross reference. If some of the systems only show the phone number, PSAP can do a reverse cross reference and through their databases find out where the address is. E911 is the technology that allows the PSAP to know where you are when you call. If your call gets disconnected for some reason, the PSAP can call you back because they received your telephone number on the 911 System.

What happens next is that the emergency dispatcher verifies your location. They've got E911. It says, "You're here, here's your address, they know where you're calling from." They determine the nature of the emergency. You are either giving them information or if you should be disabled from whatever disaster is happening to you and the best you can do is dial 911 but you can't actually talk, you can't communicate, leave your phone off the hook. They will send out emergency personnel to find out what's going on.

That is a law. They must respond. If you call 911 and are unable to communicate, leave the phone off the hook. They'll send somebody out. If you're able to communicate, then the PSAP will ask you, "Okay, what's wrong, what's going on."

I had to call 911 for my mom from a restaurant last week. It was actually the first time I've ever called 911. My mother stopped breathing at the restaurant, and the 911 operator was asking all these questions. I was feeling, "Hurry up and get here, hurry up and get here." What happened was the dispatcher sent the emergency medical out right away (snapping fingers) but kept me on the line and was asking me a whole series of questions about my mother's condition, her health, her medications. I thought they were getting all that information before they sent somebody out. No! As soon as they know the nature of your emergency, they're going to dispatch police, fire or emergency medical, and then they will ask you for whatever other background information they need if you're able to communicate that.

How many of you use a TTY from your home? (Show of hands) A few. Does anybody here use a portable TTY connected to a cell phone? (No hands raised) If you use a TTY to call, you can dial 911 directly on your TTY. They will respond with a TTY to communicate with you. They prefer not a relay call. If you dial 911 from your TTY, the E911 is going to pop up with your location. If you dial 911 through a relay service, the relay's phone number, not yours, is going to pop up. Then they're not going to know where you are. And if this is really a life threatening emergency, we all know that using relay slows down our call.

The FCC requires that they respond to a TTY call with a TTY, so just call directly. If anyone uses VCO, you know what that is? It's where you have a telephone that you go through the relay but you speak for yourself, but the relay types for you. There's a read-out for you. If you use a VCO, you need to have a keyboard to call 911. Otherwise, you will have to go through relay and you're going to slow down the call. But, again, if you have a life threatening emergency and you dial 911 and you talk to them and you tell them you can't hear, then they're going to know and they're going to send somebody out.

Now we come to the interesting part. How many of you use a cell phone? (Show of hands) So we've got a lot of people out there who have nothing with them when they're on the road. We're going to talk about this. Right now, I'm going to talk to you about how the rules work, or don't work. Some cell phones can be used with a portable TTY. That's the way they make them. You can buy this little TTY, they're about this big (indicating), you plug the jack in the cell phone and you can call whomever you want to call through relay or if you're calling someone with a TTY, talk to them directly.

But that technology uses a different language quote, language when it communicates, and if you try 911 that way, the 911 center where you're calling may not be set up to receive that call. So you'll need to understand their limitations. If you're using a portable TTY and you don't know if it's usable in your area, contact them. If it's not, have them get the education they need to set up the technology that they need. But for right now, the best way to call is a landline phone, an analog wireless, or a relay. We're going to talk about the rules about wireless after I get through CapTel.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. During nine-eleven, there were many people who were making so many calls in that area and there was such a high volume of calls that the services were overwhelmed. Do you have any answers to that kind of a problem?

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: Overwhelmed lines are going to be a problem in any disaster for all people! All people! Not just us. Not just people with hearing loss. It's going to be a challenge for all people. We're going to talk a little bit later about the fact that SMS, text messaging, is more stable than telephones for communication.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: With a landline, at least the ones that I use, you have to have electric power to make the landline work. So what happens if you have no electricity and you need to make a 911 call?

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: You better get yourself something that has a battery backup. You better get something in your home that has a battery backup. TTYs have battery backups. You need to make sure you have something that has a battery backup.

Now I want to talk about CapTel. We know that there are some states that are still holdouts on making CapTel available. One of them, my home state that I just moved back to, is Washington. We're advocating very hard to get CapTel. CapTel is, in brief, a voice recognition relay system, where the operator re-voices what's being said into a computer that transcribes onto your telephone what the hearing person is saying. If you use a two line CapTel, you can call 911 directly. You'll get right straight through because the first line that you're making the call from has your E911, and so your location information is going to pop up. If you use one line CapTel, your telephone automatically converts to a VCO. With a telephone call you make through the relay, the relay agent types back what the hearing person is saying to you and you read it. With one line CapTel, the CapTel system is designed to automatically shift into a VCO, which means that the PSAP will get your call. They will be able to respond with a TTY. However, not all states have CapTel, and not all PSAPs know about this technology. You might call with a one line, and they may try to talk to you. They may not respond with a keyboard because they don't know about that yet. So if you're using CapTel, find out if your PSAP in your local area or in your state has been educated on how to take a CapTel 911 call.

So understand if you're using two line CapTel and you know how to do that, you just dial 911 from your first line, second line kicks CapTel into business for you, PSAP sees where you're calling from, and you go about your call. One line? You're liable to run into a hang-up. My advice is if you have CapTel on your phone, you're using one line and you should have another phone in your house. Don't let that CapTel line be the only phone in your house. This is what happens in one line. When a CapTel user calls a regular call, the captioning service kicks in. But when they dial 911, the captioning service does not kick in, but the 911 Center is able to respond with their TTY. That's how it works. If you use two lines, dial 911, captioning service is automatically on the second line, the call is connected as fast as possible, it's connected to the closest PSAP

for you. 911 gets the call, the call taker gets it, they get the information about you and they can type out to you so that you're able to read on your CapTel.

Now lets move on to the challenges of wireless emergency 911 calls. The good news is, it's getting better every day in every location. The I'm not going to say "bad news." The warning is that it's a work in progress, and not every place is set up to work this way. First of all, the FCC made rules about making wireless telephones. What do you think is the problem? We've already talked about calling from landline phones in your home, your office, wherever, and E911 pops up your location. If you're driving around the state or the city, and you call 911, are they going to find you? How are they going to know where you are? There isn't an answer. So the FCC made rules, because cell phones are almost replacing landline phones for a lot of people.

The first basic rule is that wireless carriers must transmit the calls whether or not you have service. Many, many hard of hearing and late deafened people tell me, "I don't have a cell phone because I'm not going to pay \$12 a month," or whatever it is, "just to call 911 maybe once in my life." You don't have to pay to get to 911. If you can't use a cell phone for anything else, you can carry one around and dial 911. But here's the deal: They won't know where or who you are. So you have to be able to communicate to them your location and your phone number. Rule No. 2, Phase 1 of the ruling was that the wireless carriers must, within 6 months of a valid request by a call center, provide the telephone number of the person who's calling, and the location of the closest cell tower. So there are those areas that have implemented Phase 1, first of all, please note it says "after a valid request."

You want to check with your local centers and find out if they've requested this. Trust me, they all are trying to get up to speed. Many centers are already up to speed with this. But check for yourself. You need to know. When a center requests it, the wireless company has six months to comply. When you call, on an activated cell phone, it will show your phone number, and the location that it shows is the cell tower that transmitted your call. You could be calling from downtown St. Louis, and the cell tower could be five miles away, and that's as close as they're going to get finding you. You must tell them where you are. I will tell you when I called 911 for my mom I didn't know where I was. I gave the phone to the restaurant staff and said, "Will you please tell them where I'm at?" (Laughter) So that's Phase 1. In Phase 1, if you call from a cell phone, your phone number's all they're going to get, and the tower location.

Now we come to Phase 2. The cell phone company must provide the longitude and latitude of the location of your telephone that you're holding in your hand. That means that your cell phone must be GPS enabled. That does not mean that you have to have the fancy GPS system that will give you a map of how to find the museums in St. Louis on your Treo or your Sidekick or your Blackberry. It does not mean it has to have a way to locate the cell phone that you are using. It is simply a chip that's inside the cell phone that transmits the longitude and latitude of your location when you call 911.

I actually contacted T Mobile and asked them because I couldn't find it on their website,

if they were GPS enabled for 911. Two customer service reps respond to me, and one said, "I'm very sorry, no, we don't have GPS in our phones." And I went "whoa! 90% of the deaf community is using Sidekicks and they don't have 911 chips in them!" The second customer rep sent me to the website, and of course they have 911 chips in them. The first person responding thought I was talking about that fancy thing with maps so you don't get lost in the city. No, the Sidekick doesn't have that. They do have the chip. At this point, 95% of the phones on the market have that chip. So you just need to ask them if the phone is workable with E911.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you know what phone manufacturers do not have the chip, so we can avoid them?

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: Nope. You have to ask when you're shopping. Self advocacy we call that, right?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yep.

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: When you have that chip, the information that is transmitted is within 50 to 300 meters accurate. In some of the states that I researched, the distance is much smaller than that, more like between 50 and 100 meters. They'll be able to find you. The important thing to know is if you are GSP. That is why I say check with your local PSAP! If you're going traveling, check!

Rules are being implemented in stages; it's not unilateral around the country yet. Technical enhancements may not be possible in the time required. The wireless companies are allowed to apply for a waiver or a time extension. But you will find that most of the major companies are already in business for us. This is what happens when you make a cell call from your wireless. It bounces off the tower to the cell center. The cell center provides a longitude/latitude. At the PSAP center, that longitude/latitude is translated onto a map that tells them what intersection you're at. And then they dispatch help. That's at the end of Phase 2. That's how this whole cycle works.

I went onto the Internet to see how easy it would be for you to find information about your local PSAP and GPS. You pretty much can go into your state website Google search "E911" and they will give you the explanation of what your system is in your local area. In many cases, I found maps. I found a map of the state of Washington so that I can tell anywhere I go whether they're in basic Phase 1 or Phase 2. Some sites list what companies are covering which areas. I can't guarantee that this same map exists for every state because every state is responsible for its own information that they put out to their communities. I did go into St. Louis on line and there was a map with regions that were covered by E911. So if you go to your state website, search "E911," you will be able to find whatever information there may be about what's available in your area.

How many of you are familiar with VoIP? (Show of hands) How many of you have seen the commercials for Comcast, "Get your phone, your cable, and your Internet all on the same stuff"? That's what VoIP is.

VoIP is telephone using Internet technology. It's cheaper than regular phone service. People are shifting or switching. Is it safe when we need to make an emergency call? It allows a caller to make and receive calls on a telephone through the Internet. You put an adapter between your phone and your Internet connection. You subscribe for it. This is just a simple idea of how it works. You put an adapter between your phone and your Internet connection, and you have a new kind of phone service. It's not analog landline telephone service like the basic 911 and E911 from your regular home. You call, you get through (snapping fingers).

It is capable of supporting TTY traffic. But it may or may not handle voice or TTY traffic. You want to learn what your VoIP provider uses. People are going to shift. This is what I meant about technology changing every day. And for the PSAPs, it takes time for the emergency agencies to shift with the technology. There are FCC rulings stating that all interconnected systems must automatically provide 911 Service to their customers. I believe I found there was an October 2005 deadline to have 911 Service happen, but I believe they explained to me that it has not happened with all of the companies yet. If you are thinking about getting Internet telephony, just like I said, have something with a battery backup and have yourself a landline, too. We just aren't ready to give up those landlines yet! That's important to know.

This is what happens when you use VoIP. You've got a connection between your phone and your computer, and your Internet. It goes through the modem, through the phone adapter, to the phone. How, when you do all that, does that affect your 911? The FCC ruling is they've got to make those calls go through. However, you're going through the Internet, so how does it know where you are? You're calling from a computer. How do they know where that computer is? There's the challenge again. What is involved is in the technology to make it usable. The rules are out there but the technical work is still being done. The VoIP system may not be where you are at this moment. Remember, when you're investigating technology that works for you, when you're looking for cheaper phone service, make sure you understand what's going on.

We talked about power outages. Everybody says, "What if the power goes out?" The power can go out and the phone lines can stay up, first of all. Rarely do emergencies take everything out. A car accident down the street that hits a power pole can put my lights out, but my phone will still be working. If you have a TTY, make sure you have a battery backup. If you have a cordless phone in your house, make sure it's charged up. Plan for those kinds of things. Make sure you have a backup for power. The phone lines may not fail. Cell towers can be operated with generators, with emergency power supplies, so you still may be able to use a cell phone even if the landline phones go out.

How many of you know about on star in your cars? (No hands raised) On star is a high technology that I first heard about in Cadillacs, so of course I don't have that in my car. On star is like a GPS, it's like an emergency system, but it can dial 911 for you. It will connect to the PSAP closest to where your car is. But there's one problem. It doesn't know if that PSAP is working or not. When Hurricane Katrina hit, and all of the services

were going down, people who had on star were able to call 911 from their cars, but if the PSAP Center had been damaged, destroyed or made dysfunctional in the hurricane, the person who called on star 911 wouldn't know about it. There's no way for them to know that their on-star call wasn't getting through. If you have on star and I don't know if they're only going to be for new Cadillac drivers or if eventually they'll make it usable for all of us -- but if you have on star, you can call 911 from there.

When a cell tower goes down, the companies have the ability to bring in portable towers. A cell service may come up faster than a landline service. Landline and cable typically do not restore personal service until after their lines are repaired. But the cell systems can bring in portable towers and set them up.

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: How many of you are familiar with the use of pagers for sending text messages? (Show of hands) Cell phone SMS, short message system, is text messaging from a cell phone that doesn't have a keyboard. Sometimes they are as little as 40 characters, sometimes they go up to 130 characters. SMS may get through because it stores those messages you send until the radio frequency that it's sent on is free again. You might send the message today; somebody might get it tomorrow. But at least they'll get it. And again, that's based on the cell towers being able to work. SMS stores the messages, so it's not like you trying to use your dead phone, and not getting anywhere. SMS stores the messages that you're sending.

The Sidekick, or any data device that has a phone included in it, that has a phone number on it, can use SMS. Your ISP, your Internet service provider, or your T Mobile might be down but your SMS might work. When you're looking at devices, what you want are SMS and text paging and GPS enabled.

Now, sometimes the phone lines go down and the power doesn't. Not all disasters are unilateral. If you still have power, but no phone line, you have the Internet and you can use that. Your VoIP is going to work. Your voice over Internet phone is going to work. If the power is out and you have a laptop with a battery charged up, you might still be able to use your laptop.

If you have pagers, PDAs that have text service, the Internet may still be up while the phones and the towers are out. It's important you know about all these options. However, all these options are only as good as the life of the batteries. So if you start using your laptop on a battery, you if you start using your cell phone, if you start using your SMS or your pager, use them conservatively. Make only emergency calls. Do not call and, "Oh, my God I can't believe this is happening. Did it happen to you? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." No! Save your batteries for emergencies.

VoIP may work when regular phone lines are down. Cable modems and DSL users may be able to access emergency services. People who only have a dial up connection for their Internet will not be able to access their Internet if the phone lines go down. However, if you have DSL or cable Internet, you may be able to even if the regular phone lines go down. If you wonder why I pay for high speed Internet when I can get

plugged into the telephone for free or for \$9.99 a month, it might have to do with saving my life.

Now, we're going to talk a little bit about actually making the calls and getting the information.

First things first -- always have more than one system in place. I think I've said that a few times this morning and I will say it again. Always have more than one system in place, Internet, pager, phone, whatever. In your house, how many of you have visual smoke alarms? I see a few hands going up. Good for you. If you don't have them, get them! What are you going to do if you're home alone and nobody hears the smoke alarm goes off? What if the fire is right in your house? You have a short in the kitchen while you're sleeping. How are you going to know? Okay? What if your neighbor has a fire in their apartment next door to you? How many of you have flashing doorbells? (Show of hands) How many of you can hear people knock on your door? (No hands raised)

You should have a flashing doorbell. A lot of you are using landline telephones, amplified or whatever. Can you hear it ring? Can you hear it ring at night when you take your hearing aids or your cochlear implant off? Get yourself a flashing light for the telephone. Somebody may be calling you to tell you your apartment is on fire. Take care of yourself!

We talked earlier about NOAA radios. How they are "all hazards." They will send out emergency weather warnings, they will send out national security warnings, they will send out amber alerts. What the heck good is a radio to you? I'll tell you. NOAA radio sends out their signals with nonverbal information embedded in the broadcast for digital display. When NOAA sends out an alert, the NOAA radio will, if you have the right system, flash a light, shake your bed, and read out "earthquake 5.6," "hurricane warning/watch or advisory." It will give you up to a 90 dB siren. 90 dB. Some of us can pick up something that loud. They have bed shakers and they have flashers.

NOAA is going to be your first source of information. It's going to come through that radio probably faster than it will come through the TV because radio frequency is the first source of distribution for that information. When they send that NOAA information out, it goes to you, the TV stations, and the emergency responders all at the same time. You might get that information before regular radio gets it. You might get that information before the TV gets it because when it goes out to the TV, they have to wait for the guy to get in front of the camera with a microphone and the captioning to come on before they can tell you about it.

The NOAA radio has battery backup. You can take it with you. If you have to evacuate your home, you can take it with you and have it. One thing to understand, at this point, is that it is only an alerting system. It does not yet give you full details or instructions such as, "Hurricane hit, tornado hit, bridges closed." It might not be able to tell you "bridges closed." Basically it's telling you something is happening, get to the TV and

find out what or get to your neighbors or get to somebody and find out the rest of the information. If you have the NOAA radio, NOAA service triggers the EAS, the local broadcast and the local emergency responders and you.

Here's what we want to look for in wireless technology. You want to make sure it's GPS enabled. You want to make sure it has text capability, and SMS capability. And you want to put your own emergency information in your cell phone address book!

Have you heard of ICE? I c e means "In case of emergency." You put in your address book "ICE" and under that address, you put your emergency information. You put your emergency contacts, your relatives, your doctors, everything you need to know. It is something that started just about a year ago or so. If an emergency responder finds a cell phone or pager on you, it gives them a way to get important information about you. They can look up "ICE" and get some information. Just put it in there. It's simple!

Now, we're going to go through some brief tips on the communication stuff. If you call 911 from a cell phone and you do not know for sure if they are E911 capable, first things first: Give them your phone number! Give them your phone number! If that call gets disconnected, if you're shaking and you drop your cell phone or that call gets disconnected, make sure they can call you back. Then tell them where you are. But make sure you give them the phone number. If they've already checked the area and know where you live, that they're getting that information, then get on with the emergency. But first things first: "This is, and the phone number I'm calling from is, ... Then, this is my emergency."

Remember, if you have a cell phone that you're not paying for service on because you don't use a cell phone, and you call 911 but get disconnected, you have to call them back because you don't have any service on your phone to receive an incoming call. Make sure, if you choose to carry an unsubscribed cell phone with you that you have to call back. It doesn't matter if you give them your phone number. You're not paying for service; they can't call you back.

Remember again: Not all of the areas are all set up. I want to say that over and over again because I don't want anybody to walk out of here and have an emergency and call 911 and expect something that's not out there. So check with your local area. When you get home, get on your computer and find out what the service is, where you live.

Power may get knocked out; towers may get knocked out. You may lose communication. I suppose I said it's possible for phone lines to stay up and power to go down and vice versa. I'm sure it's possible for a cell tower to go out and something else to stay up. Again, have more than one communication method in place.

Be sure your information is up to date with your provider. One of the things about VoIP is you are responsible to provide a profile for them to give to E911. You are responsible to give them the information. It's not like a telephone database. You have to give them

the information. So if you move, you have to give your VoIP service provider your new address. It's not going to happen automatically. You want to make sure your information is up to date with your provider. You want to make sure that you have a clear understanding whether 911 is working in your area through the VoIP.

If you have visitors, babysitters, anybody else who takes care of things in your home when you're not there, make sure they know, because that VoIP looks like the telephone. It's the same phones that we're plugging into the wall except we put a little jack on it to make it go through the Internet. If they try to call 911, thinking it's a regular phone, the emergency might not get resolved. If you have babysitters, or you have somebody else in your home, or you have visitors in your home, and you're using VoIP, make sure they know that that's a different technology. If your VoIP provider provides you emergency stickers "This is a VoIP. 911 may not work." -- put them on that device.

When you dial 911, tell the operator where you are. It's not just the wireless company, or Internet provider that has to adjust their technology for 911. The PSAS Centers also have to revamp their technology to receive the new technology. That's why there are gaps in service. So make sure that you tell them where you are and what your phone number is because they may not be getting the information even if you gave it to your provider.

If power is out and the broadband connection is out, you may not be able to use that phone, but you may still be able to use a landline phone. In most states you can get limited service on a landline telephone if you don't use it very much. In California, I paid \$5.99 a month and I was allowed to make three hours worth of outgoing calls without any extra charges. Of course they added taxes onto that so it was like \$13 a month, but you don't have to pay \$50 a month for a landline phone. You can get limited service if you're not using it for anything but emergencies in your house. If you want to use VoIP because Internet telephony may be more clear and might be easier to hear, then you can get limited service, three hours a month, for a cheaper rate on your regular landline phone as your backup.

Now, what are you going to do? Sometime today, sometime before you leave, maybe when you get home, write a list of three means of emergency alerts that you can use. Who can tell me what emergency alert you can use? I want you to tell me now. What's one? Telephone. Landline telephone. What are two others? Emergency alerts.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: NOAA.

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: NOAA radios! NOAA radios! What else? Pagers. What are three agencies or organizations that you can contact in your area? Number one, your 911 call center, period. Number two, your state website. Number three, any emergency services office in your area. Make sure you know where to call.

Here are some resources that I've found for you. www.weather.gov is the NOAA weather service and you can read about all about what they do. So as technology gets

updated, you can find it on these websites. The U.S. Department of Justice, the ADA and 911 calls have all the laws regulating the accessibility of 911 for us. If you're going to advocate for your community and somebody says, "Well, we don't have to do that or we don't have the money to do that," you have recourse to the law that says, "Yes, you do." www.FCC.gov clicking on "Consumers" is where I found most of this information. All of the information that I used in this presentation came from these three websites. They are full of easily understandable, non-technical terms, consumer information about emergency alerting, 911 calling, and legal responsibilities. To find out what your state offers, just Google "911 Missouri," "911 Washington," "911 California." That's all I did and I got something from every state that I put in.

Questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: If I call 911 with a VCO but don't go through the relay, do you think that they will understand a VCO call and know that it's TTY even though I'm voicing?

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: If you use VCO, you're going to have to use relay, and you're going to have to give them every bit of information. I don't know if you are aware of this, but for example when you make a call in California, that relay agent who takes your call might be located in New Jersey. The relay 711 call center operators are not necessarily in the city, state, or part of the country that you're calling from. So that's why if you use relay, you're going to have to give all of the information because the relay is going to have to know which 911 to get you. That makes it really discouraging to use relay. Again, in a life threatening emergency and you are unable to hear, if you dial 911 and tell them, "I'm deaf, I have this emergency," they're going to get your location information from your landline phone.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I use the Uniphone, before the CapTel came out, and I absolutely loved the Uniphone, and I can imagine if I were in an emergency situation, I would have to type back. The Uniphone can also be a TTY.

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: If you have a Uniphone connected to your landline and you dial 911 on the keyboard, they're going to answer with a TTY. They're going to know where you are.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm wondering if people could check with their employers and have them provide emergency contact information for emergencies, so that the employee could get messages sent to his or her pager. If there's a natural disaster, if there's something happening with the weather, have your employer send the information. Maybe check with your employer to see whether or not that's available.

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: Also, and I didn't go into that because I was afraid we were running out of time, but many states have their own emergency paging devices that you can sign up for. In California, it's www.incident.com . I get all the emergency NOAA stuff right on my pager, and my vibrating cell can print it out. Here is a nationwide site. www.emergencyemail.org

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have an older cell phone. How long have the GPS chips been put in?

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: I believe that GPS started happening around 2004 or 2005, but check with your company. Check with your service provider or whoever services your cell phone. Ask them if your model has GPS.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Are there are any certified instructors on this subject in Chicago that I could ask to come to our chapter meeting?

CHRISTINE SEYMOUR: By way of explanation, what I just presented here today is not part of the CEPIN project that I'm a certified instructor for. I developed this workshop for you, just for ALDAcon here, today. There are regional specialists. You can go to find out who the regional specialist is for your area for the CEPIN training, and I'm going to give you the website: www.cepintdi.org. That site has information. You will see any workshops that are being presented around the country with the dates, times, and locations. The program itself is shifting from a grant funded program to a special Homeland Security program for delivery of the course. Information will be updated as we get it on that website.

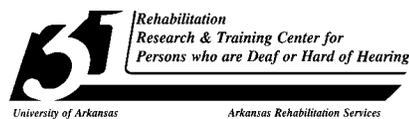
That course is a very important course. It requires 50/50, responders and deaf and hard of hearing people, in the room together for eight hours! We initiate interaction between the two groups and empower all of you to learn how to work together to do the emergency planning in your own communities. It's a fabulous workshop! So if you hear it coming to your area, volunteer to go. People say, "I can't go, it's during the week. I work." Our lives are worth a day off work!

Thank you very much for coming to this workshop today.
(Applause)

Biographical

Christine Seymour is Regional Emergency Preparedness Specialist for the Western US and Hawaii, and project of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Grants and Instruction. She is a certified instructor for “Emergency Responders and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community: Taking the First Steps to Disaster Preparedness” and has presented this workshop through out the western region. For three years prior to this position she was client support specialist for hard of hearing and late deafened adults for DCARA (Deaf Counseling Advocacy and Referral Agency).

She is group leader for ALDA at San Jose and Managing Editor of the ALDA News. She was elected president of ALDA in 2006 and will serve three years on the ALDA board.



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