

Do you know the safety "Textiquette"



*Using proper safety texting etiquette,
or "textiquette," in an emergency
might save your life.*

Coast-to-Coast... First Spouses Agree: in any emergency, it's wise to 'Text First. Talk Second'™.

Over the past few years, the Safe America Foundation has been championing emergency preparedness drills, noting that for families, neighborhoods, businesses and entire communities, it makes sense to practice what you'd have to do during an emergency. For **First Spouse Dianne Bentley** of the State of Alabama, the idea of using texting to practice staying 'in touch' during emergencies makes perfect sense.



*"Follow these simple rules and make
sure you teach your family members
the etiquette of proper texting".*

— Alabama First Lady Dianne Bentley

"After the tornadoes left Alabama's wireless networks in disrepair, we were unable to reach family members. Now we know that text messages can get through when phone lines are down or overwhelmed. I've encouraged everyone to learn to text (if they don't already know how to) and make sure they practice simple text drills with family members during National Preparedness Month."

This year, more and more First Spouses – including Arkansas First Lady Ginger Bebe and Delaware First Lady Carla Markell – are in support of this campaign.

As 2012 **First Spouse Program**

Chair Luce Vela of Puerto Rico adds, "it's vital to know how to stay in touch during a storm or other emergency."

This is when texting is a perfect communication tool." The following pages outline some simple facts of why texting is a 'safety tool.' And, things you can do to practice 'textiquette.' You'll also note that Safe America encourages you to keep your phone outside your reach while driving... so you're not tempted to text-and-drive.

Text First. Talk Second.

Almost every large scale emergency and natural disaster in the last 10 years share something in common each caused massive mobile phone service disruption for millions of Americans.

Mobile call volume simply overwhelmed provider capacity during these incidents. The desire to call loved ones after an emergency or disaster is natural. However, preparedness experts universally agree that during an emergency and its immediate aftermath, communicating via SMS text messaging should be your first choice.



This is because non-essential calls often shutdown wireless phone service and prevent 911 calls from getting through. In fact, just a single one-minute phone call takes up the same bandwidth as 800 short SMS text messages.



Text messages get through even when voice networks are congested.

Unlike phone calls, your text messages don't get "busy signals." The text system will keep trying to deliver your message until it is sent.

This makes text messaging perfect for sending non-emergency messages like "R U OK" and "I M OK."

So in an emergency:

- Let your friends and loved ones know you okay with a text message, not a phone call
- Keep your text message short
- Don't use your phone unless you absolutely need to

Texting to 911: An innovation coming to a phone near you.

Several wireless carriers have been leading the way in developing technology which will allow individuals to send text messages to 911 emergency dispatchers. By mid 2013, in many parts of the country, texting 911 will become available.



Texting to 911 is ideal for:

- allowing people who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate more effectively with first responders;
- getting an emergency message out in an area with weak wireless coverage;
- helping people communicate with emergency dispatchers when a noisy phone conversation might create danger; and
- providing victims suffering domestic abuse a discreet way to ask for help.

Safe America has been a leader in developing this functionality, and is currently in the testing stages of rolling text to 911 capability out in several areas around the United States.

To learn more go to www.safeamerica.org



Remember texting behind the wheel is never safe, not while you are driving and not when you are stopped at a light....yet there are some times when it does make sense to text.

- When you want to let people know you are safe when voice communications are not working,
- If you need to get a message out in an areas with weak voice coverage, and
- Where asking for help from law enforcement must be done discreetly.

