Have emergency numbers posted near the phone. In an emergency, it is important to be able to get help immediately. Putting a list of emergency telephone numbers near every phone in your home will save valuable time. Once you have called for help, you'll need to be able to describe what is happening and how to reach the scene of the emergency.

Be prepared to give directions on how to reach the location of the emergency. Remember, emergency workers may not know the landmarks in your neighborhood, so it is important to provide your complete street address. It is better to say “I live at 801 Delaware Street in apartment 23,” than to say “I live in the apartments behind the grocery store.” If you live outside a town, it is very important to know distances. For example, “Go five miles south of Waverly on County Road G41, then turn east on the gravel road and go two and one fourth miles. It is the yellow house on the north side of the road.”

Know what type of information an emergency dispatcher will need from you. The dispatcher will need to know some details about what has happened, or is happening, so they can send the right type of help. “My brother is hurt” tells them you need help, but “My brother fell from a tree; he can talk to me but his head is bleeding badly and he says his leg hurts” is a better description.

Sometimes the emergency helpers will want you to keep talking to them so they can tell you what to do next. Listen carefully! If you miss something they say or don’t understand some directions, ask them to repeat or explain what they said. Follow their directions exactly. Do not hang up the phone until the dispatcher tells you to.

1. Pick several places you spend a lot of time, like a friend’s home, the soccer field where you practice or a relative’s home. Write down the directions you’d give an emergency worker. Try following your directions exactly from the nearest town and see if they get you to the right spot. Figure out ways to improve your first set of directions.

2. Think about some places you might be that might not have a telephone, such as a car or park. Discuss with an adult the best way to get help if you can’t get to a phone or you don’t have a cell phone.

3. As a family or 4-H club, write on 3x5 cards some different emergency situations: a neighbor’s house is on fire; your friend has a bad bicycle accident on the way to school; or you see some-
one committing a crime. Take turns drawing cards. Explain what you would do. Be sure to share the information you’d provide emergency workers.

4. Visit a dispatch center. Ask the dispatchers about the information they need from someone calling in a report. Find out how they use the information to provide the best possible help.

**Work on it**

Find and write down emergency numbers:

- Local emergency number: __________________________
- Fire department: __________________________
- Law enforcement: __________________________
- Poison Control Center: __________________________
- Ambulance/Rescue squad: __________________________
- Doctor: __________________________
- Hospital: __________________________
- Dentist: __________________________
- Parents’ work numbers: __________________________
- Parents’ cell phone numbers: __________________________
- Other friend, relative or neighbor you can call when your parent(s) or guardian cannot be reached: __________________________

Draw a map of how to get to your home. Use the map to write directions to your home.

Make a list of the phone numbers you wrote above, along with directions to your home, and post it near all the phones in your home.

**Think about it**

Stop and think about your answers to these questions. Share your answers with an adult.

1. What were the most important things you learned as you created your emergency phone list and directions to your home?

2. Besides an emergency, when is it important to be able to give clear and accurate directions?