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*This video explains how call trees and online tracking of numbers get out-of-date easily. People move, change names (e.g., marriage), change telephone companies and email addresses - so organizations must stay current on contact information. Also mention the 'out of town relative' number (sometimes called the grandma number).*

**Transcript**

*Keeping up-to-date contact information on staff members is an ongoing challenge. Over time, people move, change their telephone numbers and email addresses. In some cases even their names change. At least annually check this information for accuracy.*

*One of the best ways to determine if the contact information you have on record is current is by using it, for example as part of an emergency exercise.*

*To test the accuracy of telephone records, employ a call tree. Anyone who has been involved in team sports is familiar with this concept. Someone wants to get a message to a group quickly. She can call two or three others, give them the message and ask each of them to call several other people. Assuming everyone in your organization has a priority list of people they are responsible for contacting, this call tree would quickly determine if the telephone numbers are correct or need to be updated.*

*Computers can automate this process, but for smaller departments, facilities or organizations – call trees work well. A call tree puts people in touch with people, which can validate that the message was both received and understood.*

*This call tree process isn’t limited to staff members. The same technique works with vendors, contractors, and other stakeholder groups.*

*Verifying email accounts is a straightforward process, but checking the accuracy of physical addresses can be more demanding.*

*Some recent wide-scale disasters have forced the evacuation of large population centers. In the confusion, some groups found it was difficult to stay in touch with staff members.*

*This challenge gave rise to a contact system that is being embraced by a growing number of organizations. These organizations now ask their staff members for an out-of-the-area contact who can act as a relay point during a crisis. This out-of-area contact is less likely to be affected by the event that has disrupted your facility. Then, if you need to get information to a staff person you lost touch with, you can contact this third party and feel confident the staff member will eventually get the information.*

*Whatever strategy you decide to employ, keeping updated contact records is an important part of your emergency preparedness plan.*