



If A Disaster Strikes, It Helps To Carry I.D.

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Hurricane Katrina's rampage is helping to fuel movements around the country to get you to carry emergency contact information.

Hear Audio Report

SEATTLE - Hurricane Katrina's rampage one week ago is helping to fuel movements around the country to get you to carry emergency contact information. You can use your cell phone, your wallet, and even your computer.

After the London bombings, we heard about the "ICE" number -- a phone number you program into your cell phone for rescuers to use "In Case of Emergency."

But some are pushing to take you back to a simpler time, before cell phones.

"You know, we tend to not do anything," says Brian Ouellette, president of Seattle-based [Shoewallet.com](#). "It takes something to happen to us or someone we know before we take action."

Ouellette says it's easy to communicate important information, with something as simple as those ID cards that come inside wallets. The problem is that people don't fill them out, or simply discard the small cardboard cards.

He's hoping you might take a minute to fill it out, and is pushing purchasers of his "Shoe Wallet" to do the same.

"Most people are out there doing activities without carrying a single piece of identification on them," Ouellette says. Yeah, but I carry my license all the time.

"Licenses don't tell people if you're a diabetic, or what your blood type is, or if you're on specific medications," Ouellette responds.

You never know when you won't be able to speak for yourself.

"Either in the event of a disaster like Hurricane Katrina or a medical emergency, or just if they are crossing the street and are hit by a car," says Laura Greenwald of the national "Next of Kin" movement. In memory of her grandmother, she's pushing "Elaine's law" which would require hospitals to contact families of unconscious patients. Elaine Sullivan died, Greenwald says, in part because the hospital didn't take the time to contact her family.

"We were shocked. We found out there wasn't a law at the time in 46 states," Greenwald told KOMO 1000 News. HR2560 is currently in a House committee, but could require all hospitals to try to make contact with a patient's family.

Hospitals can also get the information from the fairly new "Next of Kin Registry," which is a national database featuring your name, and the name and number of someone that can be contact in the event you cannot speak.

"It's a free service," Ouellette says. "They've registered over five million people over the last 20 months. And many of those have come in the week since Katrina devastated the south."