

## CodeRED - Emergency Notification System

October 16, 2009 Grundy County launched a “reverse 9-1-1” notification system for use during emergencies, which allows County Officials the ability to deliver urgent pre-recorded emergency telephone messages to targeted areas or to the entire County. Called CodeRED, this high-speed telephone emergency notification service can be used in the event of an evacuation, missing person, hazardous materials spills, boil water alerts or other emergencies that can affect people’s safety or health.

While CodeRED begins with an existing database of telephone numbers, **no one** should automatically assume his or her phone number is included. The following individuals are encouraged to add their information to the database.

- All businesses
- Residents with unlisted phone numbers
- Residents who have changed their phone number or address within the last year
- Residents who use a cellular phone as their primary phone (an associated street address is needed)
- Residents who have recently moved, but kept the same listed or unlisted phone number
- Residents who wish to receive text and/or email messages in addition to telephone calls
- Residents who receive their phone service over the internet

Requested information includes first and last name, street address (physical address—no PO boxes), city, state, zip code, primary phone numbers and additional phone numbers and email address (optional). Residents and businesses may also choose to receive text or email messages about emergencies, in addition to telephone calls.

In the event of an emergency, a message will be sent to the phone numbers listed in the database. If a voicemail or an answering machine picks up, the call the system will leave a message. Caller ID will provide the phone number 866-419-5000 that you can call back to have the message repeated. For easy identification you can program this number (866-419-5000) into your cell phone.

CodeRED is an additional measure of safety that Grundy County believes all of its residents need and deserve.

NOTICE: While the system works well for most phones, the use of special downloaded ringtones on cell phones, as well as automated telephone systems that require the caller to press a key will prevent an emergency call from reaching that phone.

**Question: What is CodeRED® and why is it important to me?**

**Answer:** CodeRED® is a new Grundy County service by which County officials can notify County residents by telephone about emergency situations or critical community alerts. The system is capable of sending messages only to people affected by a particular situation.

The speed of the CodeRED® system (up to 60,000 calls per hour) is so great that the County is able to send a message to affected households almost as quickly as County officials become aware of the situation.

**Question: Does this mean the County will be calling me constantly?**

**Answer:** No. The County respects your privacy. CodeRED® will be used only when situations arise that you should know about.

*The system will be used to send messages only to those residents who are directly affected by a particular event. For example, if you happen to live in an area for which a “boil water” advisory has been issued due to a water main break, CodeRED® will call only you and your neighbors to deliver that very important health advisory.*

**Question: For what kinds of situations will CodeRED® be used?**

**Answer:** Evacuations, water main breaks, alerts concerning a missing child or adult, law enforcement emergencies, hazardous material spills – in short, any and all emergencies and community alerts.

**Question: What should I do if I receive a CodeRED® message?**

**Answer:** If you receive a CodeRED® telephone message please:  
Listen Carefully  
Follow Instructions  
Don't hang up until you hear the whole message (the message will not be repeated)  
DO NOT call 9-1-1 unless instructed to do so (You will only tie up emergency lines)

**Question: Why do I need CodeRED® when I have radio and TV to keep me informed?**

**Answer:** CodeRED® is an additional measure of safety that Grundy County believes all of our residents need and deserve. If power goes out, you may not be able to depend upon radio and TV. However, because telephone lines are self-powered, the County can continue to keep you informed through messages delivered by CodeRED®.

Even if you have power, CodeRED® will probably be able to reach you with important information faster than TV and radio stations can put it on the air. That's because CodeRED® is a **direct connection between you and YOUR COMMUNITY.**

Many emergencies occur without advance warning. In such cases, you may have no reason to turn on a TV or radio. That's when CodeRED® can help County officials alert you immediately and advise you to take appropriate action.

**Question: How is the County going to contact me?**

**Answer:** There are two ways you can receive telephone messages from the County through CodeRED®:

1. Landline Telephone – Make sure you have at least one working corded telephone and be sure to turn the ringer on. (Cordless phones will not work if there is a power outage)
2. Cellphone

The CodeRED® “Residential Data Collection” sign-up form gives you the option of filling in both a **Primary Phone number** (landline) and an alternate phone number (cellphone). Entering an alternate phone number will cause **BOTH** your primary and alternate phone numbers to be called.

Of course, no form of communication is guaranteed to remain in operation under severe conditions. CodeRED® *does* provide County residents a powerful means of learning about vital, timely information.

**Question: Do I have to pay extra for CodeRED® service?**

**Answer:** No. CodeRED® service entirely paid for by the County.

**Question:** Does the County have my telephone number, or do I have to sign up to receive CodeRED® emergency calls?

**Answer:** While CodeRED® begins with an existing database of telephone numbers from the 9-1-1 system, no one should automatically assume his or her phone number is included. We strongly encourage you to sign up for CodeRED®. After all, you are the most reliable source of information about how to reach your household by phone.

If you have moved or changed your telephone number recently, you should definitely sign up for CodeRED® service or update information you have already provided. Any new information you supply will automatically replace old information.

**Question:** Can I arrange to have CodeRED® call my business?

**Answer:** Yes. Go to the County's website (<http://www.grundycounty.org/>) and click on the CodeRED® link. When the Residential Data Collection form opens, click on the button labeled "Click to Switch to Business Data" and fill in the required information. *Please note that emergency calls can only be delivered to a direct dial number.* Automated attendants will disrupt the process and calls will not be delivered.

**Question:** Can I choose NOT to receive CodeRED® messages?

**Answer:** Yes. The County respects your privacy.

If you do not want to receive calls, it is mandatory to notify the County in writing. However, we strongly advise you to reconsider. CodeRED® is designed to make certain you receive fast, accurate emergency information directly from the County officials whose job is to help protect you and your family.

**Question:** I live near Grundy County, but I am not a resident. Can I sign up for CodeRED®?

**Answer:** No, unfortunately. However, we encourage you to check with the County in which you live. Many use automated telephone notification systems to alert residents in times of emergency.

A vitally important service, CodeRED® is yet another way Grundy County government is seeking to improve public communications and reach out to citizens.

***If you have any further questions about CodeRED®, please call the Grundy County Sheriff's Office at 319-824-6933***