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## Palm Beach County officials warm up to ICE idea

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It's a problem police and firefighters face every day: Someone is hurt in an accident, can't talk, and isn't carrying family phone numbers or medical information.

So the heads of Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and county Fire-Rescue teamed up Tuesday to urge residents to program emergency contact numbers in their cell phones and pick up new medical information cards for their wallets.

"We'll be able to determine contact information and if they have a certain blood type - things we'll be able to find out instantaneously that we didn't have before," Sheriff Ric Bradshaw said.

Both agencies are handing out stickers for cell phones. A sticker on a phone will tell rescuers that the phone has an "in case of emergency," or ICE, numbers programmed in. Authorities encourage residents to add their spouses, parents, in-laws and other relatives as their ICE numbers. For example, to make a husband an emergency contact, program ICEHUSBAND on the phone.

Emergency medical cards also are being given out to be kept in parts of wallets where they can be easily spotted. The cards are for police and firefighters to know if someone has special medical needs. The card lists blood type, allergies, prescription drugs and conditions.

"It's a very simple program, and while it's voluntary we hope people throughout the county will take advantage of it," Fire Chief Herman Brice said.

The initiative's goals also is aimed at getting information from immigrants or visitors who can't speak English or children found without parents or guardians.

The ICE program has been around for years and it's popularity has grown in the post-Sept. 11 world where there is a renewed interest in personal preparedness, officials said.

The stickers and cards are available at all Sheriff's Office and Fire-Rescue substations.

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