

ITU standard assists rescue workers to notify victim's next of kin

23/07/2008 14:17:00 - by ITU

Global mobile phone directory code for use in emergencies



Geneva, 23 July 2008 - Emergency workers searching for next-of-kin contact information for an injured person now have a globally recognized way of doing so, thanks to a new standard from ITU.

By simply prefixing the Arabic numerical 01, 02, 03, and so on to a nominated contact, such as "01father", "02wife" or "03husband" written in any script in the mobile telephone directory, will help emergency workers in any part of the world identify contacts in order of priority and notify them.

ITU will work with non-profit organization ICE4SAFETY to promote this new way of identifying an emergency contact in a mobile handset's directory.

"In Case of Emergency" - or ICE - has emerged in some English-speaking countries encouraging people to list emergency contact numbers in their mobile phone's directory in the form of "ICE father", for example, or "ICE doctor". However, this precludes people who do not use or recognize the Roman script from readily identifying what the term "ICE" represents. ITU members expressed the need to identify emergency contacts independent of language or script.

The new standard, which is a clause to ITU-T Recommendation E.123, internationalizes the ICE concept and recommends the use of Arabic numerals (0 to 9) to denote emergency contact numbers in a handset's directory. It exploits the fact that even though written scripts differ around the world these digits are universally recognized, making it usable by anyone regardless of language or script.

Malcolm Johnson, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, said, "Emergency telecommunications is a top priority for ITU. This simple addition to a person's next-of-kin or nominated contact details has the potential to greatly reduce stress for overworked emergency workers around the world. Anything that can be done to reduce the workload of these remarkably brave people and assist in getting injured people the right care and attention is commendable. We will work tirelessly with ICE4SAFETY and other agencies to promote this concept."

"We have seen the tremendous benefit of the ICE concept to the emergency services community," said Mark Balduzzi, Developer of ICE4SAFETY. "ITU's initiative to internationalize ICE takes the concept one step further, and we wholeheartedly support this."

ITU-T Recommendation E.123, or the notation for national and international telephone numbers, defines a standard way of writing telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and web addresses. ICE4SAFETY has modified its symbol by incorporating the reference E.123. For more information on ICE4SAFETY, visit the organization's website [here](#).

For further information, please contact:

Sanjay Acharya
Chief, Media Relations and Public Information
ITU

Tel: +41 22 730 5046
Mobile: +41 79 249 4861

E-mail

Toby Johnson
Communications Officer
ITU

Tel: +41 22 730 5877
Mobile: +41 79 249 4868

E-mail