



A Personal Safety Nets Wallet Card is an effective way to be clear in an emergency situation about who you are, what health concerns need to be considered, and who should be contacted if needed. Of course, it's only useful if carried by you, so we've made it easy to put in a pocket, purse, cell phone case, car, stroller or wherever ... and, unlike a cell phone, its battery can't be dead, it can't break, and it is not password protected.

We suggest that you complete only those sections that you are comfortable with, knowing that emergency personnel and others will have access to whatever is on this card. Only you, however, will know how comfortable you feel with balancing potential emergency needs with privacy.

When you get your Wallet Card, start by folding it in half and filling out front and back: your name & contact information, your medications and allergies, and who to contact if there's a need to get into wherever you live (just in case there's a pet or dependent person in there – right?)

Then open up your card. You can probably fill in the name of your primary medical contact, and your insurance information. Then, the task here is to think of three (3) contacts you'd most like contacted if you were unable to speak for yourself. These might be family or friends – but maybe not. These might be a lawyer, doctor, parole officer, student counselor. Think broadly, but, before writing these down think:

- Is this someone (or possibly an agency) with a calm head?
- Am I able to ask this person to hold this role for me?
- Will I be okay if this person says “no”?
- Will I be okay with connecting this person to the other two?

Then, when you have three contacts, start with the first and ask. It might go something like this: “Hi, ____ I'm filling out an emergency contact card and would like to put you down as one of those I'd most like informed if I were in a car accident or for some reason had something happen and couldn't speak for myself... If it's okay with you, I'll put your name down now and we'll talk soon about details”

Having ONE person saying yes to this good; TWO is better; THREE is a good goal, and we urge you to try.

Once you've found out who your emergency contacts will be, then:

1. You'll want to let them know who the others are and how to reach one another. If there is a need for help, one might have the flu, one could be traveling ... This is why three is best. And if there are difficult decisions to make, then they can confer with and support one another.
2. Your next task is to think seriously about what information they might need if you were unable to make decisions in the moment (what medical facility you should go to ... how to pick your daughter up from school ... whom to tell that you'll not be in for work ... where the cat food is ... you get the idea).
3. Then, what information would be needed if you needed to have your affairs taken care of for, say, three months. [Link here to our master list – re-edited](#)
4. Next, think through – and you might ask them to help you do this – how they'll get access to needed information. Is it in a notebook in a fireproof place? On your computer (passwords?) In your freezer? Or have you given them all copies of everything? Think it through with an eye toward what you're comfortable with.
5. Now: Take the legal steps necessary for them to be able to do what you've asked of them, should it become necessary: Does one, or do all three, have Durable Power of Attorney? Do they hold enough information and legal authority to act on your last wishes? Could they pay your bills?
6. AND say “Thank You!”
7. Lastly – carry the card with you always. In your kitchen drawer, other briefcase, washing machine won't be helpful when one of life's inevitable and unexpected challenge comes up. Be prepared – and good luck!



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