

Best Practices for Phone Drills:

- Make after-hours number your same main CHD number
- Ensure that your local “information” i.e. (area code) 555-1212 has the correct number for your health department and that it gets to the right department (lots of numbers took us to EH, Emergency Preparedness or other departments first)
- Make your answering machine message simple and clear, be sure to include information about “reporting a communicable disease”, not just if you need to speak with a doctor
- Only leave one number for f/u
- Speak slowly and / or repeat the number to call
- Do not expect the caller to call back
- Check batteries, coverage areas, ring settings and don’t leave the device unattended while on-call.
- Attach the Central Office Epidemiology number 850-245-4401 to the on-call device just in case they need to report this case to the FDOH Central office.
- Make sure all your staff have the BOE phone number, sometimes a person who is not on-call is reachable and receives the message so make sure they have the BOE number even if not on-call
- Check the outgoing message monthly to make sure it is up to date. Also, make sure this message will work in a power outage. Sometimes messages are changed unbeknownst to Epidemiology Program
- Make sure the voice message is clear about who to call concerning Epidemiology and/or immediately notifiable conditions.
- If there is a different number to call, please state it clearly and repeat it on your voice message.
- Perform internal drills.
- Pay close attention to vacation schedules and assign back-ups as needed.
- Answering services that take a name and phone number right away in case you get disconnected

- Be sure your answering service knows your protocol-either call down a list of people until you get someone or call numerous phone numbers of one person until you get that person
- If you have a message: make it clear-If you need to report a communicable disease, press # or dial X#
- Don't have the same person on-call the entire time-give them a break.
- If you have more than one clinic site, make sure all clinic sites' after-hours phone messages direct you to the appropriate after-hours reporting number.