Equal Access to Communications
Equal access to emergency telecommunication services by different humanitarian actors – women & men, national & international, traditional & non-traditional, public & private – is crucial to ensuring that all women, men, girls and boys affected by an emergency receive the assistance they need. While communication is a common need, women, men, girls and boys may not have equal access to communication. For example:

- Mobility of women and girls in some contexts is restricted and they cannot move freely in their communities.
- Women may feel discouraged from approaching teams, or the team may be unable to approach women directly, in settings where the emergency telecommunications team is comprised of men or mostly men. The consequence is that women’s needs and concerns are not identified or addressed.
- Women and men may not have the same capacity to use the technology or opportunities to learn how to use the technology.
- Women and men may not have equal control of the technology and so are not able to send and receive information.

How to Integrate Gender into Telecommunications

Integrate Gender in the Workforce & Workplace
Recruit qualified women, both as local and international employees, to achieve gender parity in staffing. Ensure all humanitarian actors can safely access common services and that diverse women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) among affected populations can be reached and their needs documented and addressed. Ensure diverse women and men have equitable access to the emergency telecommunication services.

Integrate Participatory Gender Analysis into Needs/Context Assessments – Assess and understand the specific use of, and access to, the different types of telecommunications services, solutions and technologies available to the diverse women and men, their organisations and the humanitarian actors. Assessment teams should be made up of women and men.

Training Opportunities
Consider providing training opportunities, particularly at the local level and women-only opportunities, to increase the pool of qualified women.

Promote Inclusive & Respectful Workplaces that value both women and men, and where both women and men feel comfortable working.

Identify Barriers
Identify and address barriers to access to telecommunication services for the different actors, women, men, girls and boys.

Access to Information
Use diverse communications channels to inform different groups of women and men about the telecommunications services that are available. Check that the information is reaching, and being understood by, the diverse women and men, girls and boys.

Barriers to women’s access to telecommunications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to &amp; Control of Technologies</th>
<th>Physical Access</th>
<th>Social &amp; Cultural Context</th>
<th>Education &amp; Literacy Levels</th>
<th>Access to Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phones, for example, maybe be controlled by adult men in a household. Ensure services provided are linked to technologies accessible to the different women and men. Enable and promote women’s and men’s equal access to a range of telecommunications technologies.</td>
<td>Related to, for example, lack of access to transportation, personal safety concerns and security risks. Ensure that telecommunication services are at a reasonable distance from where women and men are located and can be safely accessed.</td>
<td>Use accessibility maps to determine which public spaces are safely accessible to both women and men. Ensure telecommunication services are available through safe and culturally appropriate spaces, which can be accessed freely and without personal security concerns by women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable).</td>
<td>Can determine, and exclude, access to technologies and information, as well as the confidence to access places and services. Set up spaces which are inviting and accessible to women and girls, and ensure that they know they are welcome.</td>
<td>Use diverse communications channels to inform different groups of women and men about the telecommunications services that are available. Check that the information is reaching, and being understood by, the diverse women and men, girls and boys.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>