

Subject:	Emergency Notification System	
Effective:	4/5/2017	Procedure
Update:	8/28/2014, 8/10/2016, 12/27/2016, 9/5/2018, 10/30/2019	
Reference:		

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office operates the public safety answering point for the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County as well as the cities that contract with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services. The Sheriff's Office maintains an automated notification system to deliver emergency messages to the community utilizing telephone lines, Frontier's subscriber database, and an ESRI based mapping structure.

In January 2016, the system was upgraded with the Everbridge® mass notification system (generic term: Emergency Notification System, or ENS) which is coordinated through the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The new ENS now serves all of Santa Barbara County, including the incorporated cities.

The ENS enables a dispatcher to create a message that will be delivered to Santa Barbara County residents during critical and informational incidents. The application is intended to blend geography (mapping) with the telephone company's database (corresponding telephone numbers) and voluntary citizen opt-ins through various contact paths including email, text message and automated voice calls in order to quickly deliver messages to specific affected areas. The system also provides a portal to send Nixle alerts, and IPAWS alerts which include Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and Emergency Alert System (EAS) to television and radio. Further, the system provides a portal for sending notifications and alerts to social media.

The ENS also includes the ability to internally/privately notify County employees.

PROCEDURE

1. A field supervisor may initiate an emergency notification session for any of the following reasons:
 - a. An emergency evacuation as a result of natural or man-made disasters such as fire, flood, chemical or biological incidents.
 - b. Incidents where an evacuation would be prudent to reduce the likelihood of injury or death such as a barricaded suspect or hostage incident.
 - c. Incidents where a timely notification may render the safe return of a missing child or at risk adult.
 - d. In the event of a jail escape, notifying the public of the location of the escape and safety procedures for their neighborhood.
 - e. At the discretion of the Operations Support Division Commander or their designee, the ENS may be utilized for notification exercises to verify the proficiency and system usefulness in disaster preparedness scenarios.

2. It is the responsibility of the Dispatch Center and its on-duty personnel to issue any necessary ENS alerts. Dispatch staff shall activate the ENS during the following occurrences:
 - a. At the request of a Sheriff's Sergeant.
 - b. At the request of a County or contract city fire department official at the rank of battalion chief or above, or their designee.
 - c. At the request of the County Office of Emergency Management.
 - d. At the request of the County Public Health Director or the Director of the Emergency Medical Services Agency.
 - e. At the request of another agency with the approval of the Operations Support Division Commander or their designee.
 - f. At the request of any city within Santa Barbara County that is unable to send an emergency session for their own area.
 - g. Whenever possible, an informational session may be issued to pre-warn citizens of an event in their area that may lead to an evacuation
 - i. Refer to the OEM Matrix (appendix #1) for when it is appropriate to send an informational advisory.
 - h. Whenever there is a breakdown in communication and the Dispatch Supervisor recognizes that any delay in sending an emergency alert will result in harm to individuals or the community.
 - i. For periodic individual training where specific recipients will be notified to demonstrate dispatcher proficiency.
3. Prior to activating the system, the following information must be provided to dispatch for the notification:
 - a. The geographical area to be notified
 - i. The area must be described with commonly understood boundaries, i.e.;
 1. Cathedral Oaks at N. Patterson to Cathedral Oaks at N. Fairview, North of Cathedral Oaks to W. Camino Cielo.
 2. 1 mile radius around 4434 Calle Real
 - b. A scripted message to the public which contains the following:
 - i. Reason for notification (evacuation, shelter in place, etc.)
 - ii. Date/time and issuing agency
 - iii. Type of action the public should take (Evacuation Order, Evacuation Warning, Shelter in Place)
 - iv. Recommended evacuation route, if known
 - v. Temporary shelter locations, if known
 - vi. Any specific instructions
 - vii. The equivalent message translated in Spanish (if the requestor can provide at that time).
4. Generally, Tier 1-3 alerts to the public are done by the OEM duty officer.
5. Sheriff Dispatch is responsible for issuing **Tier 4** alerts until an official "handoff" is made with the OEM Duty Officer.

6. When a request is made to launch a Tier 4 alert (including WEA), the on-duty Dispatch Supervisor or Senior Dispatcher will appoint a dispatcher to launch the WEA or the Dispatch Supervisor will handle it themselves. Tier 4 alerts should be sent out within 20 minutes of receiving a request to do so.
 - a. If the incident is more than 10 minutes old, the dispatcher assigned to send the notification will immediately cease answering all phones, including 9-1-1 lines, and will not handle radio traffic until the notification is successfully launched.
 - b. If the incident is less than 10 minutes old, the Dispatch Supervisor and assigned dispatcher should use their best judgement as to whether or not it is more appropriate to send out the Tier 4 alert immediately or continue answering 911 calls and handling radio calls until the 10-minute timeframe is reached and/or an incident size-up is obtained. In making this evaluation, dispatch personnel should consider that timely emergency notifications can save lives.
 - c. The WEA notification will be sent first, then followed by a mass notification alert using all contact methods. Alerts should include OEM and Sheriff Command groups to ensure they are notified of the alert.
 - d. All alerts at any tier should be broadcast in both English and Spanish without delay. If necessary, a notification in English can be broadcast first while the Spanish translation is being obtained.
 - e. OEM staff will be responsible for sending EAS alerts after the “handoff” is completed.
7. Dispatch staff shall make timely notification to County and contract city fire chiefs and relevant law enforcement commander and/or staff, regarding activation of the ENS in their geographical areas. (Checklist in “Emergency Incidents and Procedures” binder).
8. After an activation of the system, when the emergency no longer exists, a final notification shall be sent advising the affected area of the updated status of the emergency.
 - a. County and contract city fire chiefs and relevant law enforcement commander and/or staff who were notified of the ENS activation should also be notified that the emergency no longer exists.
9. The Frontier subscriber database/Emergency Subscribers Listing, or, “ESL” within the ENS is confidential and shall only be used for the intended purpose of providing emergency services and emergency notifications.
 - a. Any use for marketing, advertising, public relations or other commercial purposes of any nature is prohibited.
 - b. The ESL shall not be used as a substitute for investigative procedures in identifying unlisted or unpublished phone numbers, subscriber’s names or addresses to those numbers listed in the database.
 - c. Queries to assess data such as population density and other information needed to ensure the safety of the public and/or the proper functioning of the ENS is permitted.

- d. Notifications of a lesser non-emergency nature are permitted only to listings received as voluntary opt-ins or the publicly available white/yellow-page information layer.
10. In the event a dispatcher is unable to send a session as needed in an emergency, contact the Dispatch Projects Supervisor **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REDACTED: [REDACTED]**, the OEM Duty Officer **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REDACTED: [REDACTED]**, or Everbridge **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REDACTED: [REDACTED]** for assistance.
11. Transfer of ENS responsibilities to OEM, the “handoff.”
- a. As soon as it becomes apparent that an incident is going to develop beyond the Dispatch Center’s ability to handle the incident and maintain normal operations, the on-call OEM Duty Officer will be contacted and requested to handle further notifications as soon as possible.
 - b. Until OEM personnel have officially notified the Dispatch Center that they are assuming responsibility for issuing further ENS alerts, it is still the responsibility of the Dispatch Center and its on-duty personnel to issue ENS alerts.
 - c. Once OEM has notified the Dispatch Center that they will assume the responsibility of issuing further ENS alerts for an incident, it will be documented in the CAD incident record, to include the name of the OEM personnel who notified the Dispatch Center.
12. Ongoing Training Requirement
- a. All Dispatchers and Dispatch Supervisors will conduct practice sessions on the ENS once per month.
 - i. The practice session will include building and simulate sending a WEA notification as well as a mass notification alert.
 - ii. Practice sessions should include the use of English/Spanish bilingual messaging.
 - iii. Dispatch Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that each dispatcher on their squad has completed a monthly practice session.
 - b. A training checklist is posted on the Dispatch Center training bulletin board. Supervisors will ensure that each dispatcher on their squad has completed their practice session, initialed and dated the form. At the end of the month, the checklist will be submitted to the Communications Manager.
 - c. On a monthly basis, the Communications Manager will conduct unannounced testing of Dispatch Center personnel to assess the readiness and capabilities of the Dispatch Center, as well as the effectiveness of our ongoing training, procedures and work guides.

Appendix #1

Level of Notification	Description	Examples	Contact Method	Authorization
Tier 1 – General Info*	General Awareness Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of Warming Centers, sand bags, etc. • Special Weather Statements • Wind Advisories & Watches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media only 	OEM Duty Officer, ECC
Tier 2 – Low Urgency*	Lower level Warnings: Chance the condition will happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Level Weather Watches & Advisories <u>other than</u> wind • Urban/small stream flood advisory • Major road closure or SIG alert • Severe Storm • Red Flag Watch • Public Health advisory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Email • Nixle “Community” button 	OEM Duty Officer, ECC
*Tier 1 & 2 alerts will only be issued between 0700 & 2000hrs (7am to 8pm).				
Tier 3 – High Urgency**	Higher Level Warnings: Condition is imminent or occurring & protective measures needed.**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major road closure – severe • Weather Warnings – severe • Flash Flood Watches & Advisories • Major Flooding • Extreme/Damaging Winds • Red Flag Warnings • Tsunami Watches • Public Health action such as isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Email • Text • Nixle “Advisory” button • TTY/TTD 	OEM Duty Officer, ECC
**Advisories, Watches, & Warnings may fall into either Tier 2 or 3 based on potential impact. Use Duty Officer discretion on which Tier to use & whether or not to send notifications outside the hours of 0700-2000 hrs.				
Tier 4 – High Urgency*** Requires Immediate protective action.	Severe threats requiring actions, Immediate threat to life and/or property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter-In-Place Orders • Evacuation Warnings & Orders • CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive agents) • Violent Threats • Terrorist Act • Active Shooter • Mudslide/Debris Flow • Tsunami Warning 	All contact/delivery methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contact layers (ESL, White/Yellow Page data, opt-ins) • All text, email, cellular, TTY/TTD • Social Media • Nixle “Advisory” • WEA & EAS 	ECC, or OEM Duty Officer at the request of the Incident Commander or Emergency Services Director
<p>***There may be situations where an immediate threat to life exists but a WEA is not appropriate. In these cases, the ECC Supervisor or OEM Duty Officer has discretion over which contact methods are appropriate.</p> <p>***To ensure that a WEA goes out immediately, the WEA should be sent first, then all other methods.</p> <p>Conversely, there may be situations when a WEA/EAS alert is needed but a Participating Agency or city is not authorized by FEMA IPAWS to send such an alert. In this case, the Participating Agency or city shall contact the OEM Duty Officer or ECC to send the alert on their behalf.</p>				