

SM Alerts Policy & Procedures

City of Santa Monica  
Office of Emergency Management  
October 14, 2011

SM Alerts.net



## **INTRODUCTION**

Mass notification systems allow large numbers of people to be contacted simultaneously via multiple methods including land-line phones, cell phones, text messages, and email. A new mass notification system has been implemented in the City. The system, SM Alerts is capable of quickly disseminating information to the entire population of the City of Santa Monica, including City of Santa Monica employees, in less than ten minutes.

### **SM Alerts will have the following capabilities:**

- ability to notify Employees in an emergency.
- ability to notify the Community in an emergency.
- ability for the Community to sign-up for non-emergency notifications.
- ability for the Community to add additional methods of notification including cell phone, emails, text messaging for emergency and non - emergency notifications.

Community is defined as residents, businesses and frequent visitors to Santa Monica. This policy is not intended to replace personnel recall policies and procedures for Police and Fire Department employees. This system will replace both the WIN Notification and the Employee Emergency Telephone Call-In system.

## **SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITY**

The Office of Emergency Management will oversee the overall use of the system. The Police Department will have the primary responsibility for the dissemination of emergency information regarding imminent Police and Fire incidents. Information Systems Department is responsible for technical maintenance, data upload and the overall technical operation of the system.

Non-emergency communications will be facilitated by designated City Departments and personnel under the direction of the Public Information Division of the City Manager's Office. All public safety non-emergency communications will be directed and facilitated by designated public safety personnel.

## **SYSTEM OVERVIEW**

### **Data Sources**

There are four distinct data sources populating this system: employee data, 911 data, white and yellow page data and opt-in data.

**Employee Data**

The ability to contact employees is dependent on employees providing accurate and current contact information to the City. It is the responsibility of each City Department to insure their personnel's information is updated, including changes in contact information and identification of special skills. Employee data will be maintained by the Office of Emergency Management. Information Systems Department will upload employee data into the system quarterly to insure the most recent data is readily available in a time of an emergency.

Each Department will be responsible for collecting and submitting current employee contact information on a quarterly basis.

All City employees are required to provide contact information to be used in the event of an emergency. Both California law and the City of Santa Monica municipal code state that all City employees may be designated as disaster service workers in the event of a declared emergency.

As designated disaster workers, employees are required to provide the City with basic contact information. If information is found to be incorrect during the testing phase, Department Heads will ask employees to update their data. Employees will only be called in an emergency and the data will not be used for non-emergency use/calls.

**911 Data**

The City is able to request 9-1-1 data from Verizon for upload to the SM Alerts. The data includes all published and unpublished landline telephone numbers and their corresponding physical address. The data is intended to be utilized for emergency notifications only and is considered confidential. Upon receipt of the data from Verizon, it is securely transferred to the SM Alerts vendor for geocoding. During the geocoding process, the vendor will attempt to remove as many duplicate records as possible in an effort to prevent one residence or business from receiving multiple notifications. The SM Alerts vendor is contracted to refresh the data annually.

**White and Yellow Page Data**

This data is uploaded from the current white and yellow pages and includes all business and resident numbers currently listed.

## **Opt-In and Opt-Out Pages**

SM Alerts allows those who live, work, and spend time in Santa Monica to select the type of information they wish to receive (such as public safety, community events, traffic issues, construction, etc.) and the way in which they are contacted. The opt-in page allows people to add additional contact information including cell phone numbers, email addresses, text messages and business numbers. The community will have the ability to opt into the system via the City's website. Hard copy forms will be made available to those who do not have computer access.

Anyone who chooses to opt into the system will automatically be registered into the City's emergency alert category.

## **Other**

The Office of Emergency Management in coordination with the Public Information Division of the City Manager's Office will lead public outreach efforts regarding the system and the opt-in pages. Testing of the non-emergency, opt-in pages will be the responsibility of the designated City representatives from the respective Departments where the message originates.

For problems encountered while registering for the system, the community will be directed to contact a designated City representative.

All technical issues with SM Alerts will be directed to Information Systems Department Staff. Contacting Everbridge, the selected vendor, shall be completed by designated Information Systems Department personnel.

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION USAGES**

### **Emergency versus Non-Emergency Usage**

Usage of the system has been divided between "emergency" and "non-emergency". Emergency use generally refers to a serious property or life threatening event or condition and non-emergency use generally refers to community outreach, advertising, and information dissemination.

SM Alerts should be used carefully, with the understanding that numerous messages will dilute the effectiveness of life-threatening notifications, and can erode confidence in the system.

Non-emergency uses will be coordinated through the Public Information Division of the City Manager's Office. Public safety usage of the non-emergency category shall be coordinated through the appropriate public safety authority.

**Emergency Usage:**

Office of Emergency Management:

*Notification of Public:* Ability to contact residents and businesses in all declared and in some cases, undeclared disasters; alerts, watches and warnings.

*Notification of Employees:* Notifications to and recall of all City employees in the event of city-wide emergency or other emergent recall of personnel.

Police:

*Notification of Public:* Evacuations, notifications of protests or marches, significant crimes in progress, shelter in place, etc.

*Notification of Employees:* Notifications and recall of all employees and those with special skills (SWAT, crisis negotiators, Public Information, etc.).

Fire:

*Notification of Public:* Fires, evacuations, other emergency related information, shelter in place (hazmat), Red Flag Alerts (In most cases, the activation of the system will be conducted by the Police Department Watch Commander or his/her designee).

*Notification of Employees:* Notifications and recall of all employees and those with special skills (Hazardous Materials, Search and Rescue, Public Information, etc.).

Public Works:

*Notification of Public:* Water, sewer and gas main breakages/issues/contaminations. These requests will be forwarded to the appropriate public safety personnel for dissemination.

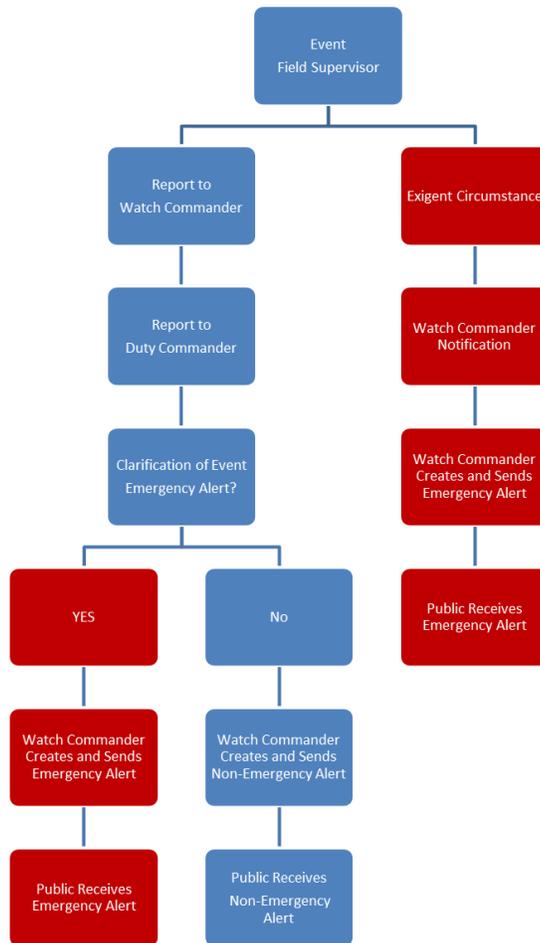
All Other City Departments

*Notification of Employees:* Notifications to and recall of all City employees in the event of city-wide emergency or other emergent recall of personnel.

**Public Notification Policy and Procedural Issues for Emergency Use**

- In the event of an emergency requiring public notification, absent extenuating circumstances, the appropriate chain of command will be followed for approval of messages prior to dissemination (refer to Figure 1a).
- The dissemination of emergency messages by public safety personnel shall only be conducted by those designated by the Chief of Police and Fire Chief.
- All messages, during EOC activation, must be approved by the EOC Director or Emergency Services Manager through the PIO.
- The Verizon database (911) is to be used for emergency purposes only.

**Figure 1a**



## **Non-Emergency Uses**

Utilizing the system for non-emergency purposes such as community outreach is an additional benefit to the community.

Non-emergency categories include:

- Public Safety Notices
- City Construction Projects
- Big Blue Bus Updates
- Seascape
- Downtown Parking
- City Council Updates
- Beach House
- Swim Center
- Permitted Events Notification
- Traffic Updates
- Expo Light Rail Construction
- Job Opportunities
- Planning Meetings/News/Events
- PCH Partners/Cal Incline
- Board and Commission Vacancies
- Camps/Classes/CREST
- Urban Forest Master Plan

Utilizing the opt-in process through the City's website, the community will have the ability to receive information on topics of interest they select during the registration process.

### **Public Notification Policy and Procedure for NON-EMERGENCY Use:**

The Office of Emergency Management in cooperation with the Public Information Division of the City Manager's Office will oversee the development of all non-emergency usage policies of the mass notification system. Designated City personnel will utilize the system according to the policies developed. These messages will be generated at the discretion of departments, with the approval of the designated City PIO, who will manage the dissemination.

### **Training**

All training on both emergency and non-emergency utilization of SM Alerts will be conducted by designated ISD personnel and OEM personnel or their designee. Once trained, personnel will be given authorization and credentials to utilize SM Alerts in their respective areas only. Employees shall not utilize the system without authorization and training.

Questions about this document should be directed to the Office of Emergency Management at 310-458-2263.