



# St. Louis leading by example for tornado resilience

With the evolution of unpredictable natural disasters, the Emergency Management Agency of St. Louis is leading the way in public safety with an ongoing program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. They are leveraging the power of Everbridge to ensure their city, residents, and surrounding communities remain resilient in the face of potential devastation.

## Highlights

- The city of St. Louis Emergency Management Agency increased their reach for emergency mass notifications from 17,000 contacts to roughly 224,000 with Everbridge.
- Their team is using text alerts, emails, and landline calls to reach the vast majority of the residents in the St. Louis area, especially during critical life-threatening situations like tornadoes.



# Challenges

One of the main challenges for the city of St. Louis, and for many communities where tornadoes are prevalent, is the necessity to have the public sign up for alerts and notifications of upcoming events. In the case of any natural disaster, lead time is critical, and being able to alert the public as quickly as possible provides more time to prepare for the event. But encouraging the public to sign up for alerts can be a challenge, especially with growing concerns about how their data may be used. When the city of St. Louis was seeking out an emergency alerts system, they also needed the capability to reach “all segments of our audience, and as many people as possible” explained Sarah Russell, Commissioner of Emergency Management.

With a deteriorating, aging public siren system, the city of St. Louis was encountering issues that required a more technological approach to get alerts out to residents. Russell saw events happening in surrounding areas, and understood that upgrading their technology was necessary. “We needed something that would give us another way to send out many more hazard notifications than what we were using the sirens for, but also to have the redundancy to back up the siren system, with a tool that could let people choose where and how they wanted to receive alerts,” Russell said.



“By the time we get to tornado watch, we’ve already been having conversations for a day or more with National Weather Service, and were ready to push notifications out on Everbridge”

**Sara Russell**  
Commissioner of Emergency  
Management, City of St. Louis.

# Solutions

Tornado warning systems have evolved greatly over the last several decades, from outdoor sirens and weather radios to tv broadcasts and text messages. The city of St. Louis now leverages the power of Everbridge to get alerts out to the impacted populations quickly and directly. “Technology has really helped out. People used to get warnings for places that weren’t near their home. But now with the technology that we have, we can program into code directly for our municipality, and I’m not getting alerts for everything around us unless I want to. It makes it a more appropriate tool and people are more accepting of it,” Russell said.

With a prior tool that the city used for about 10 years, they had opt-ins for notifications from roughly 17,000 of the city’s 300,000 residents, only about 5.6%. Now, with Everbridge publicly sourced data, St. Louis can reach over 224,000 contacts in their database for imminent life-threatening situations, without worrying about opt outs. “On a night where we have multiple tornado warnings, a really critical incident coming through the city, using Everbridge even to reach people on their landline phone, we know we’re able to reach a large number of people,” Russell said.

Beyond just external notifications, St. Louis uses Everbridge for internal notifications as well. “Not only can we talk to our city command staff, but we also have some more regional groups that we work with, and now we have that capability easily,” Russell said.

Use of Everbridge has grown beyond just government offices. The St. Louis medical operations center is one of several regional organizations that now uses Everbridge to issue notifications to their respective groups. “It helps us not only from a familiarity standpoint, but as a city it helps when our messages that we’re pushing out to the community are easily identifiable,” Russell said. With so many groups in the city aligned on Everbridge, it makes it far more difficult for rogue or spam alerts to be able to get to or affect recipients. Reducing the risk of any difficulties with an alert system is key, and getting the buy-in from so many departments across their metro area has solidified their public safety efforts.



“We encourage people to download and use the Everbridge app, we know how much power it has, and we’re ready to push messages out and ready with any warnings right behind it as a system comes through.”

**Sara Russell**

Commissioner of Emergency Management, City of St. Louis.



# About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) empowers enterprises and government organizations to anticipate, mitigate, respond to, and recover stronger from critical events. In today's unpredictable world, resilient organizations minimize impact to people and operations, absorb stress, and return to productivity faster when deploying critical event management (CEM) technology. Everbridge digitizes organizational resilience by combining intelligent automation with the industry's most comprehensive risk data to Keep People Safe and Organizations Running™.

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