

Tornado Season System Check

Tornadoes can occur with little or no warning and occur mostly during the spring and summer. While the National Weather Service issues tornado warnings, which are polygon-based to include counties or portions of neighboring counties, emergency managers play a critical role in assessing severe weather threats and act as a link to increase awareness.

Your mass notification system will be heavily called upon throughout the life cycle of a critical event, especially for a tornado. Here are some tips to prepare your system:

MEMBER PORTAL

- + The Storm Prediction Center and local National Weather Service offices closely monitor developing thunderstorms and will issue a tornado watch or warning if the storm warrants an alert. Citizens will need further direction from their local public safety agency on next steps and have access to the Member Portal to sign-up/ receive key messages.
- + Make sure your Member Portal is in an easy to find location on your website. Do you have a link to it on several key agency web pages? Many people will visit your website for services other than emergency services, by identifying your Member Portal on all agency web pages, you increase the potential for citizens to register.
- + Require certain contact information such as a location(s) or multiple contact points to increase the ability to notify the subscriber in the event they are not near their primary contact point.

MULTI-LINGUAL REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATIONS

- + Make sure your Member Portal can be easily viewed in multiple languages. Having this capability will help those who do not speak English as their primary language the ability to quickly register for alerts.
- + Allow citizens to declare the language they would like to receive the message in. This will increase the likelihood they will listen and adhere to your notification.

AUTOMATED WEATHER ALERTS AND TEMPLATES

- + Confirm your system allows contacts to opt-in to receive automated weather alerts by enabling the Weather and Hazard Alerts subscription type in their Member Portal.
- + Check to see if your organization is set-up for automated weather alerting and determine which weather and hazard alerts to offer.

With nearly over 200 alerts that could be offered, it is a best practice to not overwhelm recipients with too many options but ensure they can subscribe to alerts susceptible to the geographical area. (Note: You may want to turn Hail and Lightning alerts off due to the high frequency of the alerts).

- + Ensure your system provides location-specific weather alerts to include precise, meteorologist-drawn polygons and geographical zones that can be used to select contacts in affected areas.

- + If a contact has opted-in to receive Tornado Warnings, for example, when a tornado is issued by the NWS and one or more of the addresses entered by that contact into the Member Portal falls within the affected geographic area, that contact will automatically receive an alert that a Tornado Warning has been issued for their area.
- + Using custom templates for automated alerts, organizations can choose to send the automated notifications to all contacts in the affected region, even if they have not subscribed to that weather event via the Member Portal.
- + Pre-script as many of your messages into templates as you can. Having pre-scripted templates reduces errors and speeds up the workflow for allowing messages to be delivered accurately and in time.
- + Ensure contacts have the option to create a Quiet Period but during life-threatening weather events, such as a Tornado Warning, you may want Everbridge to deliver a notification even if the alert is issued during the member's quiet period.

SETTINGS

- + Make sure your caller ID, email address, and text/SMS message number is well known by citizens so when they receive that emergency call, they will answer it.
- + Test your IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert Warning System) monthly to make sure IPAWS credentials are properly working in your system.
- + Add social media publishing options to your system. Studies show leveraging your social media networks helps reach a larger audience.
- + Give your citizens a way to confirm they have received the message. This will provide you the confidence your messages are being received.

CONTACT DATA

- + Update your internal staff contacts. Have people retired, moved on and need to be removed from your system? If possible, establish automated data transmissions to your system.
- + Test your data to make sure numbers are valid, email addresses are current and duplicate information has been removed. Cleaning your data will help maximize the efficiency of your system.
- + Consider supplementing your data to fully expand your reach and target the most vulnerable and often underserved populations, including residents with special needs.

ABOUT EVERBRIDGE

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) is the global leader in critical event management and enterprise safety software applications that automate and accelerate an organization's operational response to critical events in order to keep people safe and businesses running. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices around the globe including Auckland, Bangalore, Beijing, Kolkata, Hong Kong, Lansing, London, Malaysia, Oslo, San Francisco, Singapore, and Stockholm.



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