

Montgomery County, Maryland



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Charles Crisostomo
Montgomery County, Maryland

OVERVIEW

Montgomery County, Maryland is the most populous county in Maryland with a population of slightly more than one million residents.

PROBLEM

The county employs a robust public alert notification system that includes traffic, weather and government related alerts through Everbridge. In addition to residents who could opt-in for the service, a number of groups, including area Public Schools, were included in the system to ensure that the right stakeholders receive alerts during critical events. However, the County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security quickly realized there was no process in place to notify area private schools.

SOLUTION

The Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) initiated a process of reaching out to private schools via preparedness workshops to ensure they had safety procedures in place. In addition, the agency created a special alert process through Everbridge to ensure the 116 private schools in the area could also receive critical emergency alerts from the County.

A Few Words from Charles Crisostomo, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Montgomery County has a robust public alert notification system that includes traffic, weather and government related alerts through Everbridge.

During an incident in May 2016, there were a series of shootings throughout the county perpetrated by the same individual who was wanted by police for a fatal shooting the day before in a neighboring County. This individual attempted to steal multiple vehicles and shot the drivers during these attempts. The suspect fled and was on the loose and traveling within the county. County Police instructed Montgomery County Public Schools in the affected areas to shelter in place or initiate their lockdown procedure.

In our After Action review it became apparent that while we had a very good procedure in place for notifying Public Schools to these types of emergencies, that we had no process to also notify the 127 private schools within Montgomery County.

In the Summer and Fall of 2016, the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) contacted the Maryland State Department of Education and obtained a list of all private schools licensed in Montgomery County. OEMHS then began to reach out to the private schools via school preparedness workshops to ensure that all schools in the county had safety plans and were aware of resources to help establish such plans. Once the workshops concluded, OEMHS created a special alert notification process through Everbridge to contact these schools in the

event of an emergency. Contacts were established in the Internal Alert Org with 116 schools and the Private School Alert System was created.

OEMHS has since instituted quarterly testing of the system, where all private schools receive an alert notification, on all delivery methods, asking them to confirm receipt of the alert, to update their contact information for any staff changes and to verify email addresses and phone numbers as appropriate. It is anticipated that future quarterly drills may contain information about upcoming school safety seminars or other pertinent safety or preparedness information.

To date, this system through Everbridge has been utilized twice to contact various schools about emergency police situations in their neighborhood that required the schools to take immediate protective actions. In both cases, schools reacted quickly and were very appreciative for the quick notification. This project is currently an ongoing project and will continue to include additional private schools throughout the county as they come online. We also foresee utilizing this system to trigger school based exercises of their emergency procedures, to maintain familiarity with all users of the system.

This project is a very applicable use-case for any jurisdiction with the Everbridge Mass Notification system, as the databases for private schools are generally held with each State's Department of Education.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) is the global leader in critical event management and enterprise safety applications that automate and accelerate an organization's operational response to critical events in order to keep people safe and businesses running faster. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Lansing, London and Stockholm.

For a full product description, along with best practices and product details please see the Everbridge User Guide and Everbridge University.

