Are You Ready?

TEXT ALERTS & 9-1-1

A Fact Sheet for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

CEPIN
Community
Emergency
Preparedness
Information
Network

The DHHCAN/NVRC Report on Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Communications Access in 2004 gave America a failing grade for its lack of a reliable emergency notification system that was accessible to individuals with disabilities. However, there are efforts on several fronts to make emergency notification systems accessible and redundant. This fact sheet contains information useful for emergency preparedness planning efforts before a real disaster occurs. Please share this with public safety officials in your area to address any potential gaps.

Nationwide Emergency Alerting Programs
Emergency Email Network
Text emergency alerts may be sent to your e-mail address, pager, cell phone and/or fax by signing up with the Emergency Email Network at:

www.emergencyemailnetwork.com.

This is a free service supported by sponsors who advertise on the website. You may sign up to receive alerts on severe weather information, Homeland Security events, cyber-threats to your computer, organ donation, daily weather forecasts, routine or Red Cross-sponsored blood drives, and AMBER Alerts (as available).

Local Emergency Alert Systems
Local Government
Text emergency alerts are also provided by local jurisdictions throughout the country for people who live or work in those areas. Visit your local government or your local emergency management office's website to sign up for those alerts.

When you sign up, you will have the option of receiving text messages to pagers, cell phones, and/or email. You can choose which alert to receive and make changes at any time. Local governments also use their websites, government cable television stations and emergency information lines to alert the public in the event of an emergency. For an example of a county government emergency messaging system, visit: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean/faqs.htm.

Local Media
Many local television stations have websites where you can sign up for alerts to be sent via e-mail. Those websites often offer useful advice and emergency preparation tips.

Calling 9-1-1
If you call 9-1-1, call from a landline (wired) telephone by voice or by using a TTY if possible. This way, the 9-1-1 operator will know where you are calling from. If you use any type of relay services (video, Internet, TTY or VCO), cell phone or the Internet (VoIP), you must tell the operator exactly what location you are calling from. When you dial 9-1-1 with a CapTel phone, you will automatically be connected directly to the 9-1-1 operator. However, you must choose the VCO option if you need the operator to type back to you.

If you are not calling about a life-threatening emergency, call 3-1-1 if available in your area, or call the local non-emergency number for the fire or police department.

Reverse 9-1-1
To ensure that emergency alerts reach as many residents as possible, emergency managers in many communities are now sending pre-recorded messages to homes and businesses automatically by phone. That system is referred to as "Reverse 9-1-1." Reverse 9-1-1 systems can be set up to also reach TTYs, pagers, PDAs and e-mail. To find out if your community has Reverse 9-1-1 technology capable of sending out text or TTY messages, contact your local police department or office of emergencymanagement.

More information about Reverse 9-1-1 is available at these websites:
• www.reverse911.com
• www.coderedweb.com/
• www.messageone.com/crisis-communications/?ac=g301a
• www.roamsecure.net/
• www.scanusa.com

Photo courtesy of Federal Emergency Management Agency, www.fema.gov.

Getting Your Community Involved

Not every community has signed onto a system that provides emergency email alerts or Reverse 9-1-1. If your community has not yet signed up for these programs, contact the local office of emergency services or Homeland Security planners to let them know the importance of reaching people who are deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing in an emergency. The life you save may be your own!

Information developed by CEPIN for TDI.

Online Resources

ABC News: www.abcnews.com
Click News Alerts for e-mail, or Downloads for software.

CNN Breaking News: www.cnn.com/email

MSNBC: newsalert.msnbc.com (software); http://email.msnbc.com (e-mail)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): www.noaa.gov

The New York Times: www.nytimes.com.
Click E-mail Options on left after registering.

USA Today Weather: www.usatoday.com/weather/wsafe0.htm

The Washington Post: www.washingtonpost.com
See E-mail Updates on right side.

Yahoo: news.yahoo.com
Click on News Alert, then Breaking News on upper right side.

Weather Bug: ww3.weatherbug.com

The Weather Channel: www.weather.com

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