

Gallatin County Mass Notification Operating Plan

2017

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- Gallatin Community Notification System
- Gallatin County Messaging System



**Gallatin
County
Emergency
Management**

Preparing Our Community

General Overview

Gallatin County is under contract with Everbridge from 2016 to 2021 for mass notification services within Gallatin County's service area. This system is divided into two parts with the Community Notification Service providing messaging to the residents and visitors of Gallatin County. The Gallatin County Messaging portion is separate and designed to provide internal messaging for government agencies within Gallatin County.

Program Management

This system is managed and paid for by Gallatin County Emergency Management for use by all agencies in the county. Use of the system is a flat rate, regardless of the amount of usage.

Community Notification System (messages to the community)

System Overview

The [Community Notification System](#) (CNS) has a primary function of providing emergency information to our community, however the CNS can also be utilized for providing non-emergency messages to people. CNS is what many people would generically call "Reverse 911", however it does much more than the traditional recorded messages to land line telephones. CNS provides voice calls, plus text messaging to phones, email, smart phone applications, social media sites as well as TTY/TDD. Many of these methods are only as good as the information provided by our community, so agencies are encouraged to help promote registration in CNS by the community.

Activation

Initiation of the CNS can be requested by a principal executive officer of a political subdivision (elected official) or a supervisor for a public safety agency through the Emergency Management Duty Officer. Public safety agencies can also request training and authorization for their command staff to initiate the CNS themselves. Allowing agencies the ability to initiate themselves provides another level of redundancy to ensure messages can be initiated quickly in time sensitive situations. The agency requesting the activation is responsible for ensuring this plan is followed and the messaging meets the communities expectations.

When an activation of the CNS is requested the following information must be provided, and included in the message, before an alert will be sent:

- Who the message is for (certain people, defined area, businesses, etc...)?
- What the incident is and where it is located?
- What actions you want people to take?
- Where they can get more information?

Example: *“The Bozeman Police Department has evacuated Bozeman High School due to a bomb threat. Students and Parents will receive instructions and updates directly from the Bozeman School District. Bozeman High School, school parking lots, and 11th street have been closed to public access. Please avoid the area to minimize traffic congestion. More information can be obtained at (506) 555-1212 or www.moreinfo.com.”*

Example: *“The Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office has issued an evacuation for residents along Bear Canyon Road due to a wildfire in New World Gulch. Deputies are working to contact residents in person, however residents are asked to leave the area immediately and not wait. More information and instructions can be obtained after leaving from (405) 555-1212 or www.moreinfo.com.”*

Generally the Duty Officer will want to speak with the person requesting the activation. This helps ensure the correct message is sent to the correct people (sometimes it will be necessary for information to be relayed) Experience has shown that if we send messages with incomplete information it causes confusion and more work, so it is better to provide complete information the first time out (even if the message is delayed an appropriate amount of time). The caveat is that sometimes we may not know all the answers yet, but in these cases we need to ensure we identify where follow-up information will be available. If the message does not make sense to you, it won’t make sense to the community.

CNS contains a variety of data sources to include unlisted 911 data (Enhanced 911), public listings and opted in users. Careful consideration should be given to the data source(s) used in sending a message to ensure its use is justified, especially with 911 data. 911 data should be used primarily for life safety related issues and 911 data should be considered for exclusion from other types of messages.

When messages are sent you can also choose to have your message sent to other partner systems. This includes social media accounts, websites and other similar accounts belonging to agencies around the county. Consideration should be given to ensure the message is appropriate for the partner system you are sending it to. For example, if the message pertains to Big Sky, then you likely don’t need to send it to Belgrade partner systems.

The Community Notification System also has the ability to send its messages to both the [Emergency Alert System](#) and as a [Wireless Emergency Alert](#) message. The ability to send the message to these two sources is restricted to Emergency Management Duty Officers. If you have a message that should be sent through these two methods, contact Emergency Management.

Cancellation Messages

It is good practice to send a cancellation message if the incident is quickly mitigated. It is preferable to send this message as soon as possible to help those previously notified to return to normal. While it may not seem urgent to the responders, the citizens are likely looking for follow up information after getting ramped up by the initial notification. In many situations, it may be more appropriate to utilize traditional notification methods through the local media for followup item.

The Duty Officer will also want to speak directly to the official requesting the cancellation to ensure the correct information is distributed.

Credentials and Training

User accounts to send a message must be requested from Emergency Management. Prior to having an account issued, authorized individuals must attend an orientation training. Training will be provided on an as needed basis and lasts about 1 hour. User accounts should not be shared.

Once training is completed and individuals activate their account, the system can be accessed to create messages at <http://manager.everbridge.net>.

Citizen Opt In

Citizens can register, and update their information, at <http://alerts.everbridge.com>.

Evacuee Contact List

A standing event has been created in CNS to allow for rapid communication with people who have been evacuated. By texting 888777 with the word EVAC. This will immediately enroll them in a dedicated contact list for evacuees on that incident. The intent is for agencies to add this information to their evacuation handouts and instruct those being evacuated to opt into this list. Then the incident commanders can provide direct updates and instructions to those who have been evacuated.

County Messaging System

System Overview

The County Messaging portion has the same capabilities at the Community Notification System, but is separate from CNS and intended for internal messaging. It can be utilized for any internal messaging functions government agencies in Gallatin County wish. Examples of this may include employee continuity of operations, facility wide messages or alerts, department messaging, call outs and back fill staffing. Internal messaging may utilize the common tools used in public notifications, but may also benefit from tools such as polling or instant conference bridges.

Activation

Agencies wishing to utilize the system for internal messages should contact Emergency Management to have their agency configured to meet their needs.

Emergency Activation Checklist

Date:

Incident Type:

Incident Name:

Requesting Official:

People to Alert:

- Specific Audience (special lists, identified areas, geographic)
- If geographic, don't list an endless number of specific streets. Specify an area such as:
 - X Street from Y Street to Z Street
 - .5 mile radius of 123 X Street
 - X Road from Y Road to Z Road, North to Q Road

What is the Affected Area:



What Actions Should People Take:

Where can they get more information:

