



## *County Executive Office*

# **Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline**

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Effective: June 30, 2008

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to provide governance and guideline on the use and administration of a County of Orange, Countywide Public Mass Notification System, hereinafter referred to as "System". This document is intended to be general, describing countywide policies, jurisdictional roles and responsibilities and activation guidelines rather than specific step-by-step procedures. The step-by-step procedures for activation and use will be maintained in a separate document maintained by the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Bureau as part of the County's overall planning and response efforts.

### **II. SYSTEM DESCRIPTION**

The primary intent of the Countywide Public Mass Notification System is to disseminate early warning and time sensitive information to county businesses and residents during time of an emergency event. The Public Mass Notification System is only one component of the County of Orange Public Warning System. As deemed fit by local authorities, the System should be used in conjunction with the other public warning mechanisms including, but not limited to, the Emergency Alert System, sirens and route alerting.

The Mass Notification System is available 24/7 and has been pre-loaded with Orange County landline phone numbers (including unlisted) and countywide geographic maps. Additionally, citizens have the option to provide additional contact information via self-registration from county and participating city websites. Upon local authority decision to activate, the System will be used to send a message, describing the situation and recommended action the public should take, to affected businesses and households via telephone, e-mail and/or text.

The County of Orange, County Executive Office (CEO), is the sponsor of the Countywide Public Mass Notification System initiative and will take appropriate measures to ensure that the System is in a state of operational readiness at all times. It is the responsibility of all participating Agencies to maximize Citizen benefits from the System.

While the County's intent for implementing and maintaining the System is for "emergency" use, upon consent from local authorities, cities may optionally use the System to disseminate "government-related" non-emergency notifications to citizens and organization resources within its jurisdiction. See Section V. Authorized Use and Section VIII. Cost for policy guidelines relating to non-emergency use.



## *County Executive Office*

### **Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline**

---

#### **III. GOVERNANCE**

The County of Orange CEO\Chief Information Office will manage the Mass Notification System as a countywide asset under the rules and protocols approved by the Emergency Management Council (EMC) and Operational Area (OA) Executive Board, and agreed upon by each individual Agency when they opt into the system.

Use of the System by each Agency is contingent upon that Agency abiding by the contract with the mass notification vendor, and the protocols established by the Emergency Management Council and Operational Area Executive Board.

The System utilizes the 9-1-1 database to complete the notifications. The use of the 9-1-1 database is regulated by the California Public Utilities Code (CPUC) sections 2872 and 2891.1. The information contained in the 9-1-1 database is confidential and proprietary and shall not be disclosed or utilized except by authorized personnel for the purpose of emergency notifications.

The County of Orange, CEO\Chief Information Office is responsible to ensure that the provisions of the contract are implemented properly. Authorized users must respect the integrity of the database, understand the privacy issues and fully comply with the policies and protocols outlined in this document. If violations of the contract provisions or the EMC/OA Executive Board-approved protocols are made by any individual or Agency, the County of Orange, CEO\Chief Information Office reserves the right to disable that individual's or Agency's login(s).

#### **IV. GENERAL SYSTEM FEATURES**

At minimum, the CEO shall acquire and maintain a Public Mass Notification System capable of meeting the following requirements.

- A. Licensed for use throughout the County's entire region
- B. Capacity to send a 45 second message to 10,000 residents and businesses within 10 minutes
- C. Capacity to send messages via phone, e-mail and text
- D. Accessible via the public Internet
- E. Provides audit trail logging and reporting
- F. GIS map interface for geographic call list generation
- G. Citizen self-registration web portal (available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese)
- H. Interactive phone survey technology and reporting
- I. IVR based notification setup and execution
- J. Capable of identifying constituents preferred language and sending message in English, Spanish and Vietnamese
- K. Capable of identifying special needs populations such as those who may need special care during an emergency



## *County Executive Office*

### **Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline**

---

#### **V. AUTHORIZED USE**

The Mass Notification System is designed to be a countywide asset, available to all Agencies that have a dedicated public safety answering point (PSAP) and resident population they are responsible to make protective action recommendations for.

An Agency may participate in the countywide System at no charge when used for emergency purposes. Agencies wishing to participate may do so by having an authoritative representative sign the "Orange County Public Mass Notification System" MOU. Upon signing the agreement, the Agency will be provided a local administrator account, a vendor provided user manual and initial training. Throughout the term of the agreement, the Agency may use the System to send an unlimited number of emergency notifications to the public as well as an unlimited number of emergency and non-emergency inter-department messages. It is recommended that each participating Agency develop and maintain written procedures to identify and address the Agency's specific use of the System within the scope of this policy guide.

Agencies authorized to join the system at no cost are limited to the incorporated cities in the Orange County Operational Area, County agencies and departments, California State University, Fullerton and University of California, Irvine. Each participating Agency will maintain, at minimum, a Local Agency Administrator responsible for implementing and administering use of the System at the local level.

#### **A. Emergency Use**

Use of the Mass Notification System for emergency activity contains two components: (1) the need to disseminate critical, safety-related information to individuals within a short timeframe, and (2) communicating with safety-responder staff, volunteers and involved parties about an approaching or present emergency event.

Emergency Public Notifications are limited to:

1. Imminent or perceived threat to life or property
2. Disaster notifications
3. Evacuation notices
4. Public health emergencies
5. Public safety emergencies
6. Any notification to provide emergency information to a defined community

As a general rule, the System is to be used when the public is being asked to take some action (e.g. evacuate, prepare to evacuate, shelter in place, boil tap water before drinking, missing child, notification of closure of the incident). The following criteria should be utilized to assist with determining the need to issue an alert:

1. Severity. Is there a significant threat to public life and safety?
2. Public Protection. Is there a need for members of the public to take a protective action in order to reduce loss of life or substantial loss of property?



## County Executive Office

### Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline

---

3. Warning. Will providing warning information assist members of the public in making the decision to take proper and prudent action?
4. Timing. Does the situation require immediate public knowledge in order to avoid adverse impact?
5. Geographical area. Is the situation limited to a defined geographical area? Is that area of a size that will allow for an effective use of the system, given the outgoing call capacity?
6. Are other means of disseminating the information inadequate to ensure proper and time delivery of the information?

If the answer to ALL of these questions is “Yes”, then an activation of the Mass Notification System for emergency purposes is warranted.

Emergency Response Notifications are limited to:

1. Contacting first responders to advise of an emergency
2. Contacting first responders to report for duty due to an emergency
3. Contacting key staff regarding an emergency or crisis situation
4. Contacting agency employees/DSWs to report at a different time or location (or provide an update) due to an emergency
5. Exercises

Emergency considerations:

1. Notification shall clearly state situation is an emergency
2. Message length shall not exceed 60 seconds
3. Always provide a phone number or website where the public can obtain additional or updated information
4. An all clear notification should be sent when applicable

#### **B. Inter-Department Communication**

Participating Agencies may use the Mass Notification System for non-emergency inter-departmental business communication as needed, without cost. It is recommended that individual Agencies identify where this would add value to their operations and establish separate written protocols and procedures for this use.

#### **C. Non-Emergency Public Use**

Use of the Mass Notification System for non-emergency public announcements requires pre-authorization from the local Agency. Non-emergency use shall be consistent and in compliance with the non-emergency guidelines included within. Agencies who contract to use the countywide System for non-emergency activity agree to give precedence to emergency notification call-outs by delaying or terminating non-emergency notification sessions if needed to increase emergency message success. The primary concern for point of failure in this situation is not the Mass Notification System, but the telephone port capacity of local phone providers responsible for delivering calls to residents. Cost associated with non-emergency public notifications is the responsibility of the local Agency, See section VIII. Costs.



## County Executive Office

### Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline

---

Non-emergency **public** notification use is **prohibited** for any of the following purposes:

1. Any message of commercial nature
2. Any message of a political nature
3. Any non-official business (e.g. articles, retirement announcements, etc.)
4. To send a message to an E911 obtained data source; see Section III, Governance, for additional information relating to E911 data use restrictions

Non-emergency considerations:

1. Citizens can become desensitized to too many government messages
2. Clearly identify sender or announcement as non-emergency

#### VI. AUTHORIZED SYSTEM USERS

In general, those authorized to make notifications will be officials in the local police, fire and city manager departments.

County Administrator: The CEO\Chief Information Office will act as the Countywide Public Mass Notification System County Administrator. County Administrator responsibilities are covered in section IX. System Administration and Operation.

County User: County Coordinated Communications Center Control One and Emergency Management Bureau personnel will be setup as "County" users. County Users will have permission to access and launch emergency notifications to all jurisdictions within Orange County consistent with County Operational Area public safety response guidelines.

Local Agency Administrator: A minimum of one designated Local Agency Administrator will be required for each Agency participating in the countywide System. Local Agency Administrator responsibilities are covered in section IX. System Administration and Operation.

Local Agency User: Participating Agencies may have an unlimited number of Local Agency Users. Local Agency Users will have access to resident contact records within their jurisdiction as well as neighboring jurisdictions with an established MOU agreement. Local Agency Users will be authorized and managed by the Local Agency Administrator and may have varied system permissions.

Inter-Department User: Inter-departmental users will have permission to inter-departmental contact information only and are authorized to use the system solely for inter-departmental communication including but limited to first responder and volunteer call-outs.

#### VII. ACTIVATION OF THE SYSTEM

Each Agency is responsible for launching messages to affected citizens and businesses within their jurisdiction. Determination of authority to request activation of the Mass Notification System rest with local officials, not with the County of Orange or the Orange



## County Executive Office

### Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline

---

County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Bureau. Detailed activation procedures shall be included in Local Agency Operating Procedure documents.

#### **A. Public Notifications**

1. The County of Orange is authorized to use the System to send notifications of regional emergencies to any and all residents within the Operational Area (example: Health Officer Countywide order). Upon sending a countywide notification, Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Bureau will, as soon as possible, advise the appropriate local Agency that mass notifications have been sent by the County to residents of their cities.
2. Other than regional emergency notifications, public notifications are the responsibility of the individual Agency. In the event that the geographical location of an incident requires a message to be delivered to multiple jurisdictions, the responsible Agency will inform each individual Agency so that they can send the message to those affected within their own jurisdiction. Exception: Unless otherwise agreed by the Sheriff's Department and the City, unincorporated neighborhoods embedded within City limits will receive mass notification of local city emergency activity from City Officials when the County EOC is not activated.
3. For an Agency wishing to send or receive messages to or from a neighboring Agency during time of a multi-jurisdictional incident, an MOU should be established between both parties that grants permission for the handling Agency to send emergency notification to residents within the affected Agency.
4. In the event a participating Agency is unable to send out an **emergency** message, the Orange County Control One Coordinated Communications Center is available to act on the local Agency's behalf.
5. Participating Agencies are authorized to develop pre-established notification lists and messages to meet their individual needs. These lists may include special populations (e.g. in-home care, schools, etc) or those susceptible to certain risks (e.g. homes within dam inundation zone). It is the responsibility of the participating Agency to create, maintain and update these lists.

#### **B. Emergency Response and Inter-Department Notifications:**

1. Each participating Agency is authorized to create employee/volunteer and department call lists and pre-recorded messages.
2. It is the sole responsibility of each participating Agency to maintain these lists and to launch notifications as deemed necessary.

### **VIII. COSTS**

The County of Orange agrees to fund the System for notifications classified as "emergency use". The County of Orange also agrees to continue to purchase updated E911 telephone data and geographic maps.

Costs associated with use of the System for non-emergency activity is the responsibility of the local Agency through separate contract with the mass notification Vendor.



## County Executive Office

### Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline

---

#### IX. SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION/OPERATIONS

Individual Agencies are responsible for providing logins and procedural training to key individuals within their Agency responsible for using the Mass Notification System.

##### A. County Administrator

The County of Orange, CEO\Chief Information Office, will assign and maintain a designated Mass Notification Program Administrator responsible for overall acquisition, accessibility, maintenance, compliance and management of all components required to provide an effective countywide mass notification system.

The County Administrator is responsible for:

1. System acquisition and contract management.
2. Policy management and as needed modification (in consultation with CEO, public safety, emergency management and emergency response personnel.)
3. Audit compliance: routine monitoring of System use to insure policy and contract compliance.
4. Access management: record management of signed MOU from each participating Agency, distribution of local administrator accounts and updated local administrator contact list.
5. Data management: E911 data acquisition, update and compliance monitoring. Countywide map file acquisition, update and overall geo-coding.
6. Testing: facilitate routine System-wide test exercise, document overall test results and recommend and execute, as needed, corrective action at the County level.
7. Public education campaign: initiate and facilitate public education campaign aimed at making the public aware of the countywide public mass notification system initiative and citizen web portal.
8. System support: provide support to Local Agency Administrators.

##### B. Local Agency Administrator

Participating Agencies agree to appoint a designated Mass Notification Local Administrator responsible for leading, coordinating, monitoring and optimizing use of the Mass Notification System at the local level. Local Agency Administrator shall act as the Agency's central point of contact and will work collaboratively with the County Administrator to insure local use of the system is within policy and MOU guidelines.

Local Agency Administrator is responsible for:

1. Contract acquisition if Agency will use the system for non-emergency purposes.
2. Local Agency Mass Notification Operating Procedure development and management.
3. Use compliance: routine monitoring to ensure System is used within the conditions and terms of this document and associated MOU.
4. Access management: local user account distribution and management, record management of MOU(s) and signed end user P&P.
5. Data management: perform routine data management, error-correcting and data integrity updates to System contact and geo-coded map data.



## County Executive Office

### Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline

---

6. Testing: facilitate routine local System test exercise, document local test results and recommend and execute, as needed, corrective action at the local level.
7. Public education campaign: initiate and facilitate public education campaign aimed at making the local community aware of the intended use of the Mass Notification System and citizen web portal.
8. System support: provide support to local Agency end-users.

#### X. INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

The CEO will acquire and maintain 24x7x365 vendor support for the Mass Notification System. Participating Agencies are authorized to contact vendor support as needed.

#### XI. ROUTINE TESTING

The Mass Notification System will be tested quarterly. Test exercises will be geared towards insuring that use of the System in an emergency is optimized. This includes testing operational readiness, activation procedures and system effectiveness as well as validating data and system processes. Through test exercises, System administrators and users will be able to observe the mode of operation to augment and refresh System and process knowledge.

Specific test exercise routines, roles, responsibilities and schedule will be detailed in the Operational Area Standard Operating Procedure document.

By signing the Mass Notification System MOU, participating Agencies agree to take part in quarterly Mass Notification countywide test exercises.

#### XII. DEFINITIONS

1. **Agency** - Any organization within the County of Orange who is responsible for protecting a resident population and has a dedicated public safety answering point (PSAP). Jurisdictionally this includes Orange County's incorporated cities, unincorporated area, the University of California, Irvine and California State University, Fullerton.
2. **System** – All components of the Mass Notification System including hardware, software, access portals, contact data and GIS maps.
3. **Resident** – Comprises households and businesses.
4. **IVR** – Interactive Voice Response is a phone technology that allows a computer to detect voice and touch tones using a normal phone call. This technology will allow a user of the Mass Notification System to launch a message to a pre-defined call list when a pc or internet connection is not available.



## County Executive Office

### Countywide Public Mass Notification System Policy and Guideline

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#### Revision History:

<b><i>Revision Date</i></b>	<b><i>Author</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>
April 18, 2008	PMNS Policy Committee	Document originated
May 19, 2008	PMNS Executive Review Team	Non-emergency session termination in Section V., Item C.
June 16, 2008	Teara LeBlanc	Exception clause in Section VII, Item A., bullet 2.