



Everbridge Mass Alert System Policy

Effective Date: 3/22/2024

Approved By: Chris Blue, Town Manager

POLICY

The Town of Chapel Hill uses a mass alert system to provide important information to employees and as it relates to adverse events and other situations of general importance. The Town maintains the confidentiality of all information provided as required by Town policies and applicable law.

PURPOSE

Consistent and accessible **Communication** during adverse and other significant events is a core Town value. It is essential to protect the **Safety** of employees and members of the public, and to maintain **Equity** for everyone affected by these adverse conditions.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. VALUES



Communication: We take part in constructive dialogues and set clear goals and expectations so we may better understand our roles in the workplace. Our organizational values serve as a common language when discussing each other's decisions and actions.



Safety: We strive to maintain our own mental and physical well-being and the well-being of those around us. We are dedicated to a work environment that minimizes risk of injury or accident. We are also dedicated to an environment that provides for honest and courteous discussion of workplace issues without fear of repercussion.



Equity: Although we may hold different roles in the organization, we all work toward the common goal of serving the Town and the Town's residents and customers. Therefore, we seek and support policies and actions that are administered consistently and fairly to everyone regardless of rank, tenure or personal background.

POLICY APPROVAL

Chris Blue, Town Manager



Procedure: Everbridge Mass Alert System
Effective Date: 3/22/2024
Approved By: Cliff Turner, HRD Director

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Types of Communications:

Currently the Town uses the Everbridge Mass Alert System, which is part of the Orange County Emergency Management System and is branded as “OC Alerts.” Emergency alerts sent by the Town will show up as being sent by “AlertChapelHill.” Departmental alerts sent by Town departments will show up as being sent by “Info[Department Name]”.

The Everbridge Mass Alert System has two primary functions for the Town:

- **All Employee Communications:** These messages are sent by the Alert System ExecUsers to all Town employees about serious, adverse situations which could impact their personal safety or work situations, or for important information relevant to all Town employees.
- **Departmental Communications:** These messages are sent by a Departmental PowerUser to all or some employees in their department. These messages are generally time sensitive and/or convey important information that the department wants to elevate.

The following questions can provide guidance in determining whether the Everbridge system is the appropriate delivery system for a message. Please consult your department PowerUser or the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Risk Management for further guidance:

1. Does the message relate to employee safety or provide important information that is relevant to the recipients?
2. Is the message time sensitive?
3. Will the contents of the message help recipients enhance their own safety and wellbeing, provide information of general interest, or help resolve an urgent matter?
4. Does the message need to be more prominent and stand out from more routine communications?
5. Are there other, more effective, or efficient ways to communicate the message that will accomplish its purpose in a timely fashion?
6. Do you have employees who need this information and have no other way to receive it? (For example, many employees do not have an email address and might need to receive information via text.).

Access to the System

The Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) or their designee is responsible for the general administration and overall management of the Everbridge Alert System.

Each Department will designate at least one employee to have management access to utilize and maintain the system and these names will be submitted to the EMC. Larger departments are encouraged to designate additional employees for this function. These employees will be granted access to the system through a registration email.

PROCEDURES

The EMC or their designee will organize initial and ongoing training so that the employee can perform the necessary functions.

User Roles and System Permissions

The Town designates three types of system users:

- a. **ExecUser:** These users have full system access to perform any necessary function required to support the Everbridge system and communicate with employees. They are authorized to send out Town-wide alerts of any type. **ExecUsers are the only Everbridge users that can send messages to all Town employees.**

Current Authorized ExecUser include:

1. Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) or designee
2. Deputy Coordinator of Emergency Management, or designee
3. Public Information Officer (PIO) or designee
4. Chief Technology Officer (CTO) or designee
5. Orange County Everbridge Administrator or designee

- b. **PowerUser:** Each department should have at least one PowerUser. Larger departments are encouraged to designate at least two PowerUsers. PowerUsers can:

- Enter and edit employee data;
- Create specific subgroups to support departmental communication interests;
- Send out messages to all their department’s employees or specific subgroups of the department as desired; and
- Create templates to be used for recurring departmental communications.

- c. **DataUser:** Depending on departmental needs, some departments might designate a DataUser (in addition to their PowerUsers) specifically to help maintain their Everbridge database. **DataUsers cannot send messages.** DataUsers can:

- Enter and Edit Employee Data; and
- Create Specific Subgroups to support departmental communication interests.

This table summarizes the various types of user permissions:

Type of User and authorization level	All Town Messages, including emergency messages and multi-departmental messages	Departmental messages -to all members of a department or to specific subgroups	Enter/edit employee data	Create communication subgroups	Must attend training
ExecUser	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PowerUser	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DataUser	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

PROCEDURES
CONT.

Types of Alerts: The Town uses the following two types of alerts:

Emergency Alert: An emergency alert requires immediate action from the recipient and usually contains one or more of the following elements:

1. Shelter in place—shelter in a structure that gives you protection from the event
2. Go inside—stay inside until an all-clear message is received
3. Evacuate—relocate as instructed, using identified routes
4. Prepare—prepare for a predicted or unfolding situation
5. Avoid—stay away from a designated area
6. Execute—carry out a pre-planned action
7. Be on the Lookout for (BOLO)—report suspicious activity related to the event

Situations Which Might Require Sending an Emergency Alert are, but not limited to:

1. Adverse Weather
2. Town Wide operational status modifications
3. Significant Traffic issues
4. Significant Public Safety information or activities
5. Water system issues
6. Missing persons alert
7. Active Shooter Alerts

Town-wide emergency alerts are sent by an ExecUser. A department's PowerUser can send emergency alerts to everyone in their department or to selected members of the department.

General Information Alerts: These are alerts that provide important information that is of value to the recipient and somewhat time sensitive. They typically do not require immediate action.

Examples of General Information Items include, but are not limited to:

1. Public Health Alerts
2. Road Closures
3. Transit Route diversions, delays, or cancellations
4. Meeting cancellations due to an adverse event, such as canceling a Council or Advisory Board meeting.
5. Staff Shortage
6. Out of Order Notifications
7. Staff Meeting Changes
8. Departmental Events
9. Upcoming Trainings
10. Payroll or HR issues of general interest

Town-wide general information alerts are sent by an ExecUser. A department's PowerUser can send general information alerts to everyone in their department or to selected members of the department.

Developing Department Alert Guidelines:

Departments are strongly encouraged to further develop and maintain guidelines for using the alert system and review them with the EMC or their designee. Here are some suggestions:

1. Set up messaging subgroups as necessary to assure that you are communicating only to those who need to receive specific messages.
2. Use this system prudently to protect its unique ability to convey the importance of the sent message to the recipient.
3. Develop standard templates for recurring messages.
4. Keep the messages short. Be clear about what action, if any, the employee should take.
5. Identify your messages as applicable only to your department or the specific recipients.

NOTE: If you are testing the alert system, ALWAYS put "TEST" before and after the message.

Set up and Maintenance

New Employees: The Microsoft Active Directory, integrated with Everbridge, will send new employees an email with a registration link. **It is the responsibility of the employee to enter in their contact information. At a minimum, the employee must provide their work email.**

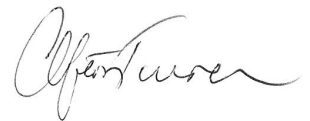
Existing Employees: The EMC or their designee will send Town-wide reminders at least annually to departments to review and remind departments that existing employees should update their information by a set deadline and will follow up to ensure compliance. Department PowerUsers and Data Managers will be responsible for assuring the accuracy of the data for the employees in their departments and completing the necessary group updates by the set deadline.

Departments with many essential/onsite workers and/or regular hiring/turnover may need to review and update their employee subgroups more frequently. Please consult with the EMC for further guidance. If a department's PowerUser leaves the department or Town employment, the department should designate a new PowerUser within 14 days and notify Emergency Management of the change within the 14 day timeframe. Emergency Management will train the new PowerUser on the system within 30 days of their designation.

PROCEDURES
CONT.

PROCEDURES
APPROVAL

Cliff Turner, Human Resources Development Director



ADDITIONAL
CONTACTS

SCOPE

This policy replaces and supersedes any previous Town policies, departmental policies, handbooks, or unwritten policies or practices covering the same subject. Departmental policies in compliance with this policy are referenced in Section XI below, **Related Information.**

DEFINITIONS

Administrator: An employee who has full access to the Everbridge Alert System and can perform any function. Administrators are the only employees who can send messages to the public. Currently, Orange County Emergency Management is the only governmental entity with this level of authorization within the local Everbridge Emergency Alert System.

Alerts: A system or technique that rises above all other distractions and gains the recipient's attention.

Data Manager: An employee designated by their department who can enter and edit employee data and set up communication subgroups in the Everbridge Alert System. Data Managers cannot send messages.

Emergency Alert System: A system used to send warnings over broadcast signals such as radio or TV; or wireless/satellite communications pathways such as those that send information to a computer, smart phone, smart signs, or other devices.

ExecUser: An employee designated by the Town who has full access to the Everbridge Alert System for Town use. ExecUser are the only employees authorized to send alerts to "All Employees" entered into the alert system.

PowerUser: A employee designated by their department who can enter and edit employee data, set up communication subgroups, develop communication templates, and send messages to employees of the department through the Everbridge Alert System.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are responsible for

- Providing accurate contact information within the registration portal and updating it, as necessary.
- Reading and responding to alerts and following instructions provided
- Asking questions about anything they do not understand

Everbridge Data Managers are responsible for

- Maintaining the subgroups for employees in their departments up to date according to established schedules.
- Keeping employee information confidential consistent with Town policies and applicable laws
- Attending regular training session
- Asking questions about things they do not understand

Everbridge PowerUsers are responsible for

- Reminding employees to update their contact information and ensure they are in the correct group or subgroup within their department.
- Using the Everbridge Alert System as intended to send departmental and Informational messages
- Creating communication grouping subsets and approved templates for their department
- Keeping employee information confidential consistent with Town policies and applicable laws
- Attending regular training sessions
- Working with their Department Heads to establish guidelines for appropriate use of the Everbridge System
- Asking questions about things they do not understand

Department Heads are responsible for

- Designating one or more PowerUser(s) in their department
- Designating a Data Manager if necessary
- Working with their PowerUser(s)/Data Manager to establish a regular schedule for updating their department's employee contact information

RESPONSIBILITIES
CONT.

- Working with their PowerUser(s)/ Data Manager to set up communication subgroups and approved templates to further departmental needs
- Working with their PowerUsers to establish guidelines for appropriate use of the Everbridge system
- Assuring that their employee information is kept up to date in the Everbridge System
- Helping employees understand what the Everbridge alerts mean and what to do when they receive them
- Asking questions about anything they do not understand

Organization-Wide Everbridge ExecUser are responsible for

- Using the Everbridge system in a manner consistent with established policies and procedures
- Assisting the Emergency Management Coordinator with the system's administration and technical support as requested
- Sending "all employee" messages as authorized.
- Helping departments send multi-departmental messages.
- Asking questions about anything they do not understand

The Emergency Management Coordinator or designee is responsible for:

- Overseeing the overall management of the Town's Emergency Alert Systems, including the Everbridge system
- Establishing policies and procedures for system use and maintenance
- Setting up PowerUsers in the system and training PowerUsers on how to use the system.
- Helping to educate employees about the Everbridge System and what to do when they receive an alert from it
- Organizing regular training for Everbridge users
- Delegating tasks as needed
- Sending an annual reminder to departments to update their employee contact information and ensuring departmental compliance with this policy
- Acting as a resource for the Town and Community
- Overseeing the retention lifecycle of the records produced by the Everbridge system abiding by the record schedule

POLICY
HISTORY

This policy replaces and supersedes any previous Town policies, departmental policies, handbooks, or unwritten policies or practices covering the same subject. In the event of any disparity between this policy and the Town's Code of Ordinances and/or applicable local, state, or federal laws, the Town's Ordinance and/or applicable laws shall prevail.