Colorado Springs Police Department
Standard Operating Procedure

DL-1841-01 Emergency Notification System

Section 1800 – Personnel Functions

Effective Date: 5/5/2025
Supersedes Date: 7/13/2023

.01   Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures regarding the use of the Emergency Notification System (ENS).

.02   Cross Reference

GO 1841 Staff and Personnel Notifications

.03   Definitions

Emergency Notifications System (ENS): A web-based notification system that sends text and voice-based messages to specific individuals or registered contacts in a geographical area.

Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS): A national system managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public. These notifications are sent through any combination of:

- Emergency Alert System
  - A television and broadcast radio-based notification system that interrupts normal programming to provide information.

- Wireless Emergency Alerts
  - A system that sends notifications to any wireless cell phone user when they enter an established geofence. This system will send notifications regardless of the user's registration with the 911 Authority.

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio
  - A radio broadcast to radios tuned in to receive notifications from the NOAA weather system.

- Internet-Based Services
  - Public websites that have partnered with FEMA to disseminate the information in a notification.

Terminology: The following terminology has been approved for use in ENS notifications:

- *Pre-Evacuation Warning*: PRE-EVACUATION WARNING for [Location] due to [Incident Type]. Be prepared to leave. If you are in danger, evacuate immediately. If you need extra time or help to evacuate, consider leaving now. For more info, monitor local media.

- *Evacuation Order*: EVACUATION ORDER for [Location] due to [Incident Type]. Everyone in this area is ordered to evacuate immediately. For more info, monitor local media.

- *Shelter in Place*: SHELTER IN PLACE for [Location] due to [Incident Type]. Please secure your home or business and stay away from doors and windows, OR shelter in a safe location until further notice.

.04   Procedure

The ENS is a web-based software designed to send mass communications to registered individuals via landline telephone, cellular telephone, email, text and app messages.

The ENS program will be used for situations with a public safety nexus, including direct threats to life, or in situations where the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) is statutorily mandated to conduct a public notification for a specific geographical area (e.g., Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) notifications).

The ENS is not to be used for any for-profit activity, advertising of any product or service, political messages, or personal use.

System Update and Maintenance

ENS system updates and maintenance will be the responsibility of the El Paso Teller County 911 Authority (Authority) and/or identified personnel in the Communications Center. Per Authority policy, each communications center will identify an individual to serve as the agency point-of-contact for ENS requests, issues, and troubleshooting and managing templates for their agency. The communications manager will serve as the ENS Administrator for CSPD.

Access to ENS

The ENS is accessible from any computer or cellular phone with an internet connection by authorized users who have completed mandatory training. Authorized users are defined as:

- Communications Manager
- Communications Lead Supervisor
- Communications Supervisor
- Communications Lead Dispatcher
- Communications Training Cadre

When a communications employee no longer needs access to, or is no longer employed with CSPD, a help desk ticket will be submitted to the 911 Authority requesting the account be deactivated.

Training

The CSPD ENS administrator will ensure end-user training is conducted in the training environment monthly to meet the requirements set forth by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Authority MOA.

Authorized employees will complete the training required as directed by the Authority ENS Administrator before access is granted to the system. After access has been granted, authorized employees will conduct monthly test notifications in the ENS Training environment. Per FEMA requirements, users are required to complete one IPAWS-related notification per month to maintain their certification.

Activation of ENS

Personnel authorized to request an ENS activation include:

- Any communications supervisor, lead supervisor, or manager.
- Any CSPD sworn supervisor actively engaged in, or familiar with specifics of an incident.
- Any CSFD Battalion Chief, Shift Commander, Deputy Chief, or Chief actively engaged in, or familiar with specifics of an incident.
- Any detective assigned to the Registered Sex Offender Unit
  - This will only apply to SVP notifications.

Considerations in sending an emergency notification include, but are not limited to:

- Nature of the situation
- Time of day
- Unique situations and circumstances of the area selected for notification
- Concurrent incidents occurring near city limits that could cause message confusion
- Concurrent incidents occurring that could create an increased impact on the local telecommunications infrastructure

Upon authorized request, or as directed, approved communications personnel will follow the necessary steps outlined in training, to send a notification:

- A clear, specific need for the notification must be provided to the communications center.

- A defined geographical border or radius for the notification must be provided to the communications center.

- Activations are short yet detailed with a brief description of the event and the desired action to be taken (e.g., information sharing, evacuation, shelter in place, etc.).

- ENS activations are pre-configured to allow for quick activation. Communications employees are limited in their ability to customize the notifications.

- If an evacuation order is issued, it may include the geographic location being evacuated, a location that the evacuees should report to, and possible routes to take to evacuate, if this information is known.

- As specific situations dictate, a follow-up notice may be sent to inform recipients that the incident has concluded and/or the evacuation or shelter in place information has been lifted.

Authority policy prohibits citywide and/or county wide notifications without approval from the Authority ENS administrator. If a need for such a large geographic notification is identified, the request will be vetted through the communications manager and the Authority ENS administrator.

The communications center has the final authority in activating an ENS notification. Concerns or disputes about sending an ENS will be handled through the appropriate chains of command.

IPAWS

IPAWS uses established communications infrastructure to send immediate notifications to the public. These notifications will interrupt normal programming and potentially override privacy and quiet time settings on devices. The IPAWS system, used in conjunction with standard ENS notifications, could have a potentially negative impact on local communications infrastructure. Standard ENS notifications do not require an IPAWS addition, but all IPAWS notifications require a standard ENS notification.

IPAWS methods of notification are managed by the Authority and are limited to Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and weather radio activations.

IPAWS is strictly regulated and actively monitored by multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Weather Service (NWS).

Activations through the IPAWS modules in the ENS may only be done by users who have completed the ICS 247.A IPAWS training course. A copy of the completed course certificate must be on file with the CSPD ENS administrator and the Authority ENS administrator.

NWS regulations prohibit local agencies from sending any weather-related notifications through IPAWS.

Users are prohibited from sending missing juvenile notifications using IPAWS. These notifications will be requested by an appropriate investigations unit submitted to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation for issuing an Amber Alert.

Misuse of the IPAWS system can result in certification revocation for the user, agency and possibly the entire El Paso Teller 911 service area.

Use of IPAWS is limited to *imminent* life threats requiring *immediate* action by citizens; for the purposes of this directive, these situations include:

- Evacuation Order:
  - Fire Incident
  - Flooding Incident
  - Hazardous Materials
  - Gas Leak
  - Bomb Threat
  - Law Enforcement Activity

- Shelter in Place:
  - Fire Incident
  - Gas Leak
  - Hazardous Materials

- Active Assailant

The communications employee has the discretion and final authority to use IPAWS technology in any of the above situations in conjunction with standard ENS notifications. At times, the use of the IPAWS system may not be appropriate due to several factors that could include:

- Geographically small area
- Time of the day
- Imminency of evacuation needs

Reports

ENS usage reports will be made available to supervisory personnel when requested.