



<b>GENERAL OPERATIONS</b>			<b>1214.00</b>		
		<b>ALERT PUNTA GORDA</b>			
<b>ISSUED:</b> 11-07-2019	<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> 11-07-2019	<b>REVISED:</b> 12-04-2025	<b>REVIEWED:</b> 12-04-2025	<b>PAGES:</b> 5	

## CONTENTS

This procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| I. ADMINISTRATION OF USERS             | IV. OPT-OUT DATA |
| II. ACTIVATION AUTHORITY –<br>EMPLOYEE | V. OPT-IN DATA   |
| III. ACTIVATION AUTHORITY -<br>PUBLIC  |                  |

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to outline access and use of the Everbridge Mass Notification Suite that comprises the AlertFlorida Statewide Notification System provided to the City of Punta Gorda by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (hereinafter referred to as the “Division”).

## SCOPE

This procedure shall apply to all Punta Gorda Police Department personnel.

## DISCUSSION

The delivery of emergency messages is a basic and legitimate function of law enforcement. However, guidelines are necessary in order to ensure that police personnel are able to operate efficiently and achieve necessary objectives.

## PROCEDURE

### I. ADMINISTRATION OF USERS

- A. The AlertFlorida Everbridge system is entirely web-based, with all management and notification functions accessible via <https://manager.everbridge.net>.
- B. Account Administrators can add, edit, or delete users for an account. Account Administrators consist of public safety public information personnel and select public safety department heads.
- C. In an effort to maintain security of user and contact data, the establishment of Account Administrator accounts will be limited to the minimum number practical for functional administration of the Punta Gorda's organization(s) in the system.
- D. Administrative Access
  - 1. Administrative access to Punta Gorda's application of Everbridge (hereinafter referred to as Alert Punta Gorda) must be approved through the department head of either the Punta Gorda Police Department or Punta Gorda Fire Department.
- E. Training
  - 1. The Division recommends that all Account Administrators, Organization Administrators, and Message Senders be required to complete the "CARES Best Practices for Notifications" and "MN [Mass Notification] Message Sender" Certifications in Everbridge University.
  - 2. In addition, the Division recommends that the user agency require users to acknowledge receipt of this SOP by electronic or manual means, to include that they have reviewed the MOA (attached/incorporated by reference), specifically the authorized uses of the system.
- F. The Punta Gorda Police Department Public Information Officer will be responsible for annually reviewing all administrative user accounts within the Punta Gorda's organization(s) to validate the continued relationship and need for access of each current user.
- G. Revocation of administrative use of the Alert Punta Gorda application will be automatic upon the user's separation of employment. Misuse of the system will also result in the user's removal from the account.

## II. ACTIVATION AUTHORITY – EMPLOYEE

- A. Messages sent by employees will be sent using only designated message templates approved by the department heads of the Punta Gorda Police Department or Punta Gorda Fire Department, or their designees.
- B. The department heads of the Punta Gorda Police Department or Punta Gorda Fire Department, or their designees will have the authority to approve employee notifications.

## III. ACTIVATION AUTHORITY – PUBLIC

- A. As a public-facing emergency notification system that has the ability to rapidly notify citizens, businesses, and visitors in Punta Gorda, great care must be taken to ensure that all notifications sent via the public organization are an appropriate length, correctly formatted, provide clear instructions, and are targeted to the specific area impacted by the emergency event.
- C. The department heads of the Punta Gorda Police Department or Punta Gorda Fire Department, or their designees will have the authority to approve employee notifications.

## IV. OPT-OUT DATA

- A. Messages sent using “Opt-Out” data should be restricted to imminent or actual life-threatening emergencies, and should consider the time of day when determining if it’s appropriate to use “opt-out” data for a notification. Opt-Out data in-use by Punta Gorda includes:
  - 1. White and Yellow Page Data
  - 2. This data is “opt-out” because the citizen did not request their information be used for the purposes of receiving an emergency notification, but rather it was obtained by Charlotte County for use in life-threatening emergencies. While the determination of whether a matter is a life-threatening emergency is a discretionary decision, the following criteria may help determine the need to send an alert to opt-out citizen contact data:
    - i. Severity: Is there a significant threat to one or more individual’s life safety?
    - ii. Public Protection: Is there a need for members of the public to take a protective action in order to reduce loss of life?

- iii. Warning: Will providing warning information assist members of the public in making the decision to take proper and prudent actions to increase safety?
- iv. Timing: Does the situation require immediate public knowledge in order to avoid adverse impact to life or safety?
- v. Geographic Area: Is the situation limited to a defined geographic area? Is the message capable of being focused on this area?

Examples: Sending a message about a missing child to opt-out landline telephones at 2 a.m. is not an appropriate use of opt-out data because the majority of our citizens are home in bed asleep, and are unlikely to spot the child. Sending a message to opt-out landline telephones inside a one (1) mile polygon advising them to shelter in place due to a chlorine leak at a water treatment facility is an appropriate use of opt-out data, because citizens need to take action to ensure potential openings into their home are secured to limit risk to their personal safety.

B. Alert Punta Gorda messages sent via the Community Engagement channel should be sent with care, since they are capable of being posted to Google Public Alerts. The system has the following Community Engagement categories.

- 1. Alert: Sent to citizens via email and SMS text; posted to Google Public Alerts.
- 2. Advisory: Sent to citizens via email and SMS text only.
- 3. Community: Sent to citizens via email only unless they have adjusted settings for additional paths.

C. Finally, the Expiration of the message should be set for the shortest likely duration of time in which the alert or hazard is expected to remain active.

D. Messages sent via the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) must comply with all applicable State and Federal rules, as outlined in the Punta Gorda Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Please note:

- 1. Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) messages are currently limited to 90 characters, and should be expected to be broadcast countywide, and may also be received in adjoining counties near county borders.
- 2. Messages sent via the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be heard regionally depending on the local media market.
- 3. Messages sent via HAZCOLLECT will broadcast over NOAA Weather Radio and will be heard countywide.

**V. OPT-IN DATA**

- A. Messages sent to “opt-in” contact data, e.g. those citizens who have registered through the Alert Punta Gorda public portal should still be sent with care, however message content that pertains specifically to any requested subscription topics are received at the citizen’s request.

**APPROVED**



**PAMELA R. SMITH, CHIEF OF POLICE**

**STAFF REVIEW DATES:** 07-30-2021, 11-30-2023, 12-04-2025

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