Waltham Police Department
CHAPTER 81A
EMERGENCY ALERT PROGRAM (EAP)

General Order Number: GO-01
Effective Date: 06/2010, 03/2012, 09/2015, 08/2022, 05/2023, 05/2024

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (ENS):

1. ### PURPOSE:

   The purpose of this policy is to establish uniformity and standards in using the City of Waltham Emergency Notification System (ENS), powered by Code Red.

   The ENS provides a mass communication system that is capable of rapidly communicating with, employees, residents, businesses, and identified groups over multiple paths including telephones (cellular and landline), email, and wireless devices.

   The ENS is used for mandatory emergency messages and important community alerts. Mandatory messages should be used only for emergencies as overloading the public with informational messages will desensitize this system.

2. ### POLICY:

   All 911 personnel will be trained to utilize the City of Waltham ENS system to create and rapidly disseminate time-sensitive emergency messages and information to others using telephone numbers, email addresses and/or text-capable devices stored in the Code Red database.

   The ENS enables the City of Waltham to provide citizens with essential information quickly in a variety of situations, such as severe weather, crime alerts, missing persons and evacuation of building or neighborhoods.

   In most situations the ENS is capable of sending a city-wide message in less than thirty (30) minutes.

3. ### SYSTEM ACCESS:

   The ENS is a web-based program that is accessed within the 911 Communications Division. This system allows trained, authorized users access to the system via a pass code at any of the 911 center work stations.

The Officer in Charge of the 911 center and the Chief ETD can remotely access the system on-line using any internet-capable computer or via telephone to connect to Code Red's automated attendant or live operator.

The System is controlled and managed by the 911 Department which shall have primary responsibility for ensuring that timely system alerts are generated, whenever appropriate, based on the type and severity of each incident/event.

4. **PROCEDURE:**

   a. **EMERGENCY ALERT ACTIVATION GUIDELINES:**

      1. All outgoing ENS requests shall be made by the Polce Officer-In-Charge to the Officer-In-Charge of the 911 center, the Chief ETD or their designee.

      2. Emergency messages can be made at any time of the day or night if necessary.

      3. Emergency messages should be brief, clear, and concise. These messages should only include information that is vital to those being called and very specific instructions on what actions should be taken.

      4. When the emergency situation is resolved and there is no longer any danger, a new call session should be launched to inform everyone previously called, that the emergency has ended.

      5. The decision to launch an outgoing calling session should be based on the following factors:

         a. The danger presented by the emergency.

         b. The usefulness of the message sent.

         c. Whether the message needs to be delivered immediately or should be delivered by other means.
         d. The consequences of not sending a message.

         e. The risk of causing an unnecessary inconvenience or alarm by sending a message.

         f. The accuracy of the available information.

The following are examples of situations in which time-sensitive emergency notifications or Community Alerts via the System may be utilized:

ALERT LABELS:

    1.   Severe Weather Conditions.

    2.   Natural Disasters.

    3.   Kidnapping/Abduction.

    4.   Endangered / Missing persons.

    5.   Hazardous Materials Incidents.

    6.   Power Outage and Back up Failures.

    7.   Crime prevention alert.

    8.   Investigative canvassing.

    9.   Dangerous person / Prisoner escape.

    10.   Dangerous animal alert.

b.   **EMERGENCY ALERT NOTIFICATIONS:**

Emergency alerts may be sent in situations involving immediate, pending, anticipated or perceived threats to public safety or property.

An **"EMERGENCY ALERT"** is a priority communication notification and will send a notification to <u>everyone in the call directory</u>.

This type of notification is recommended when an immediate notification will enable individuals to take steps that will reduce the likelihood of injury or death or provide critical information to the staff to avoid panic or reduce concern.

Timing for sending an ***EMERGENCY ALERT*** will be done as soon as possible considering manpower and 911 center call volume.

When sending an emergency alert all individuals in the database will receive an alert.

c. **NON-EMERGENCY / IMPORTANT COMMUNITY ALERT MESSAGES:**

The systems purpose is to providing information to the public and staff during emergencies or other quality of life issues or incidents.

Non-Emergency and Important Community Alert Messages are sent out to all the numbers in the directory. Community members subscribing to Code Red can choose not to receive general messages by entering their information on the Code Red enrollment page and selecting "Remove Phone".

NON-EMERGENCY CALL PROCEDURE:

1. Messages should be brief, clear, and concise. These messages should only include information that is vital to those being called and very specific instructions on what actions should be taken.

2. Informational calling sessions shall only be made during reasonable hours. Informational calling sessions **SHOULD NOT** be made between the hours of 2000 to 0800 hours.

3. The decision to use the ENS for informational calling sessions should be based upon the:

   a. Usefulness of the message being delivered.

   b. Timeframe and outgoing call capacity.

   c. The accuracy of the information available.

   d. The specific group(s) of people to be targeted by the message.

   e. Inconvenience to phone customers.

   f. The danger of causing unnecessary panic or alarm; and whether or not there are alternative methods available to deliver the same information more efficiently.

5. **OTHER CRITERIA:**

There may be other situations in which alerting the public becomes necessary. It is not practical to define all cases in which the ENS will be used.

The following criteria should be used as a general guideline for determining the need to issue an alert:

a.   **SEVERITY:** Is there a significant threat to public life and safety?

b.   **PUBLIC PROTECTION:** Is there a need for members of the public to take protective action in order to reduce loss of life or substantial loss to property?

c.   **WARNING:** Will providing warning information assist members of the public in making the decision to take proper and prudent actions?

d.   **TIMING:** Does the situation require immediate public knowledge in order to avoid adverse impact?

e.   **GEOGRAPHIC AREA:** Is the situation limited to a defined geographic area? Is that area of a size that will allow an effective use of the system, given the outgoing call capacity?

f.   Are other means of disseminating the information inadequate to ensure proper and timely delivery of the information?

IF THE ANSWER TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS IS YES, THEN ENS ACTIVATION IS WARRANTED.

6.   **ADDING OR DELETING CONTACTS / NUMBERS IN THE SYSTEM:**

The City of Waltham uses phone information obtained through the White Pages phone directory.

The ENS system allows any resident, business owner, property owner or employee of the City of Waltham to subscribe to the ENS system and add their communication devices.

Subscribers are allowed to enter additional home, business or cell phone numbers, email addresses, or text information.

A link for the Emergency Notification System (ENS – Code Red) can be located on the City of Waltham and Public Safety websites.

Community members can choose not to receive General Messages by entering their information on the Code Red enrollment page and selecting "Remove Phone". They will continue to receive emergency messages.

Community members can choose to opt out of both Emergency and General Messages by contacting a member of the ENS team and request their information be removed. This is done by having the phone number placed on a do not contact list.