



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: July 21, 2009
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Pamela Mottice Muller, Director Office of Emergency Management *PMM*
Ed Kreins, Police Captain
Subject: Implementation of the New Mass Notification System
Attachments: 1. None

INTRODUCTION

Mass notification systems allow large numbers of people to be contacted simultaneously via multiple methods including land-line phones, cell phones and email. A new mass notification system has been installed in the City to replace the old Teleminder system. The new system is capable of quickly disseminating information to the entire population of the City of Beverly Hills in less than fifteen minutes. The old Teleminder System was slow, difficult to program and could only notify individuals through phone lines.

The new Mass Notification System is operational and has the following usages:

- ability to notify employees in an emergency,
- ability to notify the Community, in an emergency, through uploading the 911 database and the use of white page data,
- ability for the Community to add other methods of notification, besides the number listed in the 911 database (e.g. cell phones, email etc.) to the emergency notifications database, and
- ability for the Community to sign-up for non-emergency notifications.

Community is defined as both residential and business.

The Police Department is responsible for the emergency usage of the system. This would include sending test and emergency messages. The Office of Emergency Management supports and oversees the overall emergency use of the system.

Non-emergency communications is the responsibility of the Communications Office of Policy and Management Department.

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DISCUSSION

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Data Source

There are four distinct data sources that populate this system: employee data, Emergency Service Number (ESN) 911 data, white page data, and the "opt-in" page data. This section describes these data sources.

Employee Data

Employees are responsible for keeping their personnel information updated on an intranet page. Information Technology (IT) downloads the employee data into the system therefore allowing the City to notify and recall employees and advise families that employees are okay after a disaster or emergency. Human Resources will assist IT in ensuring and maintaining the integrity of the data. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will periodically test this portion of the system.

911 Data

The Beverly Hills Police Department has access to all unpublished landline telephone numbers in the City by special monthly subscription to an ESN 911 Database from AT&T, which contains all business and residential phone records, published and unpublished. This data is intended for automated telephonic notification devices only. Considered proprietary and confidential by state and federal statute, the use of unpublished information is also restricted by AT&T and may not be utilized for any purpose other than an emergency. Updated every forty-five days by the Police Department, this data is secured by several layers of security.

White Page Data

This data is uploaded from the current public white pages and includes all businesses and residents numbers currently listed.

Opt-In Contact Numbers

The emergency opt-in page, currently found on the City's website, allows residents and businesses to add additional contact information such as cell phone numbers and email addresses. It also allows multiple family members to sign up to receive emergency messages. All Community members should sign up by going to the City's website. The Police Department Administrative Office can answer questions and assist residents with website problems, or help those without a computer in signing up. A FAQ sheet was developed to assist the community and is found on the City's website.

An opt-in option could be advertised to the community to collect contact information for non-emergency notification such as information of general interest and announcements. This will be further studied by the Communications Office and implemented in the future.

Other

The City's Office of Emergency Management will load any citizen registered in the special needs evacuation registry into the system.

The community white page data base and the opt-in database will be tested at least once a year by the Police Department.

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PUBLIC NOTIFICATION USAGES

Emergency Usage versus Non-Emergency Uses

Usage of the system has been divided between “emergency” and “non-emergency” uses. The primary purpose of the system is to communicate with the public and employees in emergencies, but the system also has applications for non-emergencies. Emergency uses, the use of the 911 database, refers to a serious property or life-threatening event or condition. Examples of emergency uses are as follows: all life-threatening emergencies and disasters; emergency alerts, watches and warnings; evacuations and shelter in place orders; and for notifications of burglaries or other crimes in progress.

Non-emergency uses, the use of the white page database, generally refers to community outreach and information dissemination. On occasion, the City Council will pass emergency measures that, while not life-threatening, have broad-based implications throughout the City. In situations when all, or nearly all, residents will be impacted, the Mass Notification System can be used to briefly explain the circumstances and direct residents to more information. Also, a non-emergency opt-in program may be developed to give the Community the option to register for a telephone-based tool, for which they will receive occasional messages related to the City’s operations and programs. These calls will be generated at the discretion of departments, with the approval of the Communications Office, which will manage their dissemination. This portion of the program is currently not operational and is still under discussion.

The Mass Notification System will be used in rare cases so as not to dilute the effectiveness of life-threatening notifications, nor erode the confidence and privacy of residents.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends all City Council members and their families go to www.beverlyhills.org/emergency notification to add alternate means of communications such as cell phones and email addresses to the current 911 database. Staff requests City Council members also encourage their friends and neighbors to do the same. Community members having questions should call the Police Department Administrative Office at 310-285-2100 or the Office of Emergency Management at 310-285-1025. The City continues its outreach to educate the Community to sign-up for both the City’s system and the County of Los Angeles new mass notification system at www.Alertlacounty.gov.

Pamela Mottice Muller