

CITY OF CHESAPEAKE**NUMBER: 1.30****ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION****EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/04/14****SUBJECT: CHESAPEAKE ALERT
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION/
CITIZEN INFORMATION/EMPLOYEE
NOTIFICATION SYSTEM****SUPERCEDES: 07/26/11****REVIEWED: 03/04/14****I. PURPOSE**

To establish a policy for the authorized use, administration and support of the City of Chesapeake Emergency Notification/Citizen Information/Employee Notification System, hereinafter referred to as "Chesapeake Alert."

II. SCOPE

Chesapeake Alert utilizes a variety of telecommunications paths to provide information to targeted recipients in a rapid manner. Messaging may be in voice or text-data forms, depending upon the situation, the capabilities of the receiving device(s), and the choice(s) of the recipient. The system has three designated purposes, as follows:

Emergency Notification: To provide messages of a time-sensitive nature to targeted groups of recipients, using both City-generated contact information and/or recipient-provided contact information, where the need for the message is deemed to meet the definition of an "emergency" as outlined in Section III of this policy. Emergency Notification messages are sent to as many affected persons as possible, without regard or requirement for their having previously expressed a desire to receive such notices.

Citizen Information: To provide messages of an informational nature to recipients who have self-identified (opted-in) their desire to receive such messages and who have provided appropriate contact information relative to their desired means of receiving the messages. Citizen Information messages are sent ONLY to recipients who have expressed a desire to receive such notices.

Employee Notification: To provide messages to City employees relative to their jobs and/or City operating conditions using both City-generated and recipient-provided contact information. Employee Notification messages are sent to as many message-appropriate City employees as possible, using all available contact information, without regard or requirement for the employee having previously expressed a desire to receive such notices. Employee Notification messages intended for a wide audience (ex: City operating conditions, facility closures, etc.) shall be coordinated with the Public Communications Department prior to release. Messages of a more specific nature, having distribution to a subset of employees (ex: specific work crew instructions, operational changes affecting individual employee groups, callout of specific employee groups (ex: SWAT Team) etc.) require only the approval of the department head or designee prior to release.

III. DEFINITIONS

Authorized User – An individual, designated specifically by this policy or subsequently designated by an individual designated by this policy, who is authorized to provide final approval for the dissemination of a message to recipients. It is not required that an Authorized User create the message; however, all messages must receive approval from an Authorized User prior to dissemination.

Communications Format – Any of multiple means of delivering messages to recipients. Includes, but is not limited to, landline telephones, cellular telephones, VOIP telephones, electronic mail, text messaging, direct message services. (NOTE: Chesapeake Alert is designed to provide messages to individual recipients, in a collective distribution. As such, messaging using social media and/or website distribution is outside the scope of this policy.)

Contact List – Any listing of recipient contact information, regardless of the manner generated, used for the purpose of disseminating a message. The Information Technology Department shall provide the means for individual City departments to generate and/or maintain contact lists. Further, the Information Technology Department shall develop processes to interface department-generated (opt-in) lists with an overall City database to enhance the reach of Emergency Messages.

Emergency – An unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action.

Emergency Situation – A situation, currently occurring or reasonably likely to occur, which would cause immediate danger to life, health, or property, and one in which immediate action is necessary or recommended to prevent or mitigate the anticipated effects.

Emergency Message – A communication, either verbal or in electronic format, providing information and/or a call to action which requires immediate attention by the recipient(s) due to an active or imminent emergency situation. Messages must be clear, concise, and complete, and they must receive appropriate approval before dissemination.

Non-Emergency Message – A communication, either verbal or in electronic format, of an informative nature and/or one not requiring immediate action due to an emergency situation. Messages must be clear, concise, and complete, and they must receive appropriate approval before dissemination.

IV. AUTHORIZED USERS

The following City staff members, and their designees, are authorized to activate the Chesapeake Alert System during periods when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is not activated, and to approve the content and dissemination of Emergency Messages:

City Manager	Deputy City Manager(s)
Emergency Services Coordinator	Director of Public Communications
Police Chief	Fire Chief
Deputy Emergency Services Coordinator	Chief Information Officer
Director of Public Works	Director of Public Utilities

As referenced in Section V (E) of this policy, during periods of EOC activation, Authorized Users are responsible for ensuring that ALL uses of Chesapeake Alert (Emergency and/or Non-Emergency messages) which are reasonably related to the activation shall be coordinated, in advance, with the Public Communications Department.

Names and titles for individuals designated by any of the above to act as Authorized Users for dissemination of Emergency Messages shall be provided to, and a list maintained by, the Information Technology Department.

In order to ensure coordination of efforts, consistency of messaging, and general awareness, the Authorized Users and their designees, as noted above, should be included in all Emergency Message deliveries and/or provided with a copy of the message via appropriate means as quickly as possible following dissemination.

When an Emergency Message is disseminated, a copy of the message text, signed by the approving Authorized User, shall be provided to the Office of Emergency Management as quickly as possible for records management purposes.

System activation and message content for Non-Emergency Messages and/or messages for City Employees shall be approved by the appropriate Department Head or designee. Copies of Non-Emergency Message text, together with the signature of the approving individual, shall be maintained by the individual departments. Departments and/or specific City staff may, at their option, opt-in to any or all contact lists in order to receive messages for informational purposes.

V. POLICY FOR USE

- A. At no time will messages, other than Emergency Messages, be sent to any recipient, regardless of the communication format, without the prior request of the recipient via the opt-in process. Non-Emergency Messages shall only be disseminated to those who have specifically asked to receive same.

- B. All applicable local, state and federal regulations governing the dissemination of communications via methods used by the Chesapeake Alert system shall be adhered to at all times. Communications via Chesapeake Alert shall be of an official, non-political, non-commercial nature with the overarching intent to provide relevant, necessary information and/or direction to the public in a timely manner.
- C. While the City is not subject to state and federal restrictions regarding the times during which automated messages may be sent, it shall make all reasonable efforts to comply with the spirit of such regulations, particularly as it relates to the dissemination of Non-Emergency Messages. Emergency Messages shall always be delivered in as rapid a manner as possible, regardless of the time of day, due to their inherently time-sensitive nature.
- D. City departments and agencies which elect to utilize the Chesapeake Alert system are fully responsible for the content, format, approval and distribution of Non-Emergency Messages. Each such department shall designate and provide training for at least one liaison to serve as the focal point for Chesapeake Alert within the department and in interactions with the Information Technology Department.
- E. During periods of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation, ALL uses of Chesapeake Alert (Emergency and/or Non-Emergency messages) which are reasonably related to the activation shall be coordinated, in advance, with the Public Communications Department, and all messages shall receive prior approval. For Non-Emergency messages of a notification nature (ex: cancellation of activities, etc.) it shall be adequate for a single coordination to cover all messages.
- F. Content for Non-Emergency Messages shall fall under the same approval methodology and process as that disseminated to the media and/or public, as outlined in Administrative Regulation 3.04. Departments may, at their option, develop standard message templates for appropriate Non-Emergency Messages and provide these to the Public Communications Department for approval. These templates may then be used, with event-specific data added, without further approval. Messages which deviate from approved templates, or for which no template exists, must receive approval in advance from the Public Communications Department.
- G. The use of the Chesapeake Alert system, and the Non-Emergency Message functions in particular, shall be limited to only those communications deemed to be of significant importance as to warrant such use. Departments shall recognize that an over use of the system will inherently lead to a diminished attention rate by recipients which could, in the extreme, damage the effectiveness of Emergency Message delivery. Department Heads shall be responsible for ensuring that an appropriate level of use is maintained. The Information Technology Department will generate an annual report of system usage and provide same to the individual departments for their use in analyzing usage patterns.

VI. DEVELOPMENT OF CONTACT INFORMATION – OPT-IN PROCESS

- A. The Information Technology Department, with assistance from other departments as appropriate, will develop forms and other vehicles to enable citizens to register for Chesapeake Alert Emergency Message delivery and to opt-in for Non-Emergency Message delivery. Such forms shall follow a standardized format, to ensure consistent information capture, but may be cosmetically customized to meet department needs related to printing or distribution.
- B. City departments shall provide opportunities for citizens to register and opt-in during events, meetings, programs and at other appropriate venues. This shall include all City departments, regardless of their level of usage of the Chesapeake Alert system. The Information Technology Department shall make available opt-in forms and other materials for those departments not actively engaged in using the system.
- C. All opt-in forms shall include an option allowing the completing individual to exclude their information from provision under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). If the completing citizen does not select this option, then their information shall be provided subject to a valid FOIA request.
- D. Citizens completing the opt-in form shall be afforded the opportunity to select as many or as few methods of communication as they prefer, so long as they provide appropriate contact information. No international contact telephone numbers (landline or cellular) shall be accepted and, in the event such are provided, no message delivery shall be made to such numbers.
- E. In the event departments determine that certain types of messages can only be delivered using specific forms of communication (ex: messages too detailed for text, which must be delivered via email) then this shall be made clear in the opt-in process so that appropriate choices may be made.

VII. SYSTEM SUPPORT

The Information Technology Department shall provide all administrative and technical support for the Chesapeake Alert system, including maintenance of the overall contact list (for Emergency Messages) and the overall employee contact list (for Employee Messages). Information Technology staff shall be responsible evaluating requests for changes/updates to message categories and other functional aspects of the system. Requests for updates and/or system support should be made via the IT Help Desk, with the message subject line being “Chesapeake Alert,” or via the IT HELPLINE (757-382-8999) outside of normal business hours.

Individual departments shall be responsible for maintaining their own Non-Emergency Message contact lists. Departments shall also provide any contact information they may generate using methods outside the online registration system to the Information Technology Department for inclusion in the overall contact list.

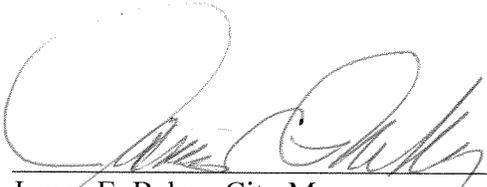
During times of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation, Information Technology staff shall maintain a presence in the EOC at all times, to provide support in the event of Chesapeake Alert system activation or technical issues.

VIII. TRAINING

Training for all users of the system, both Authorized Users who provide final message approval and other staff members who may have a role in development or deployment of the system, shall be provided by the Information Technology Department according to a schedule established by that department. Information Technology will also utilize a "Train The Trainer" approach to better facilitate training delivery within departments. Department Heads must approve all requests for training.

IX. TESTING

The Information Technology Department, in coordination with the Emergency Management Office, shall develop and implement a regular, recurring test program for the Chesapeake Alert system to ensure system availability and reliability. The testing program will also provide for refreshing user skills. Reviews of the testing process will be conducted and a report provided to the City Manager or designee which evaluates overall system performance, identifies deficiencies, and makes recommendations for remedial actions.



James E. Baker, City Manager

3/4/14
Date