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AR50198

Ms. Sheila Kitz
Chief Administrative Officer, County of St. Paul No. 19
5015 - 49 Avenue,
St. Paul, AB, T0A3A4

Dear: Ms. Kitz,

As you are aware, the Government of Alberta is modernizing the Alberta Emergency Public Warning System (EPWS). The new Alberta Emergency Alert warning system will launch in Fall 2011.

We are pleased to now provide Alberta Emergency Alert training sessions throughout the province from July to September 2011. Attached is an information package about Alberta Emergency Alert and a schedule of available training sessions. Training will be provided by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency and there is no charge to users.

We strongly encourage all communities to participate in the new program by nominating users to attend a training session. Alberta Emergency Alert will provide digital alerts across the province to reach more distributors and Albertans than ever before. Users of the previous EPWS will not be automatically switched over to the new system without Alberta Emergency Alert training.

If you have any questions about Alberta Emergency Alert, please contact Ms. April Diver, Public Warning Project Lead, at 780-644-1106, or by email at april.diver@gov.ab.ca.

We look forward to enhancing public safety through this unique emergency preparedness program.

Sincerely,



Ray Gilmour
Deputy Minister

Attachments

cc: Dennis Bergheim, Glen Zayac, Terry Senecal, **Tim Mahdiuk**

Background:

The first provincewide emergency public warning system was developed and launched in Alberta in 1992. The Alberta Emergency Public Warning System (EPWS) delivers critical public information directly through local radio and television stations. This system is currently in place today. Municipal officials such as fire chiefs, directors of emergency management, First Nations representatives, and provincial and federal representatives such as Environment Canada, are trained to activate the system when there is a threat to public safety.

A new system called "Alberta Emergency Alert" will be implemented fall 2011. This new system will provide increased system reliability and enhanced coverage of alerts across Alberta. In partnership with distributors across the province, Alberta Emergency Alert will provide emergency alerts directly to the public in time to save lives.

What is Alberta Emergency Alert?

Alberta Emergency Alert is a digital public warning system used to alert the public of hazards, potential emergencies or disasters, through participating distributors (such as broadcast media) and the Internet. This web-based tool will be available to all communities in Alberta.

Based on the urgency, severity and certainty of the alert, it will air directly over television and radio to the affected area (**critical alerts**) or it will be available to distributors to air at their discretion (**information alerts**). All alerts will be posted on the Alberta Emergency Alert website where the public can subscribe to receive the information they are interested in. In most cases the main content of the alert will also be available in both official languages (English and French).

The goal of the Alberta Emergency Alert program is to expand the availability of alerts across a variety of distribution channels, including social media applications and Reverse 911.

What type of alerts can be issued?

Alberta Emergency Alert is designed for all types and severities of alerts enabling Albertans to increase personal emergency preparedness. These alerts can range from weather concerns to industrial incidents, AMBER Alerts or health hazards.

What types of alerts go directly to air?

Critical Alerts - where public safety is threatened and time is essential, Alberta Emergency Alert will interrupt radio and television immediately. These alerts will also be displayed on the Alberta Emergency Alert website and Really Simple Syndicate (RSS) Feed. The following type of alerts may become Critical Alerts:

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|---|--|---|
| ✓ Aircraft Crash | ✓ Dangerous/Deadly Air Quality or Water Issues | ✓ Landslide |
| ✓ AMBER alert | ✓ Earthquake | ✓ Magnetic Storm |
| ✓ Catastrophic loss of 911 | ✓ Explosives | ✓ Meteorite/Falling object (e.g. space satellite) |
| ✓ Civil Emergency | ✓ Flash Flood | ✓ Terrorism |
| ✓ Chemical/Biological/Radiological threat | ✓ High-Intensity or Large-spread Urban Fire | ✓ Tornado |
| ✓ Dam Overflow | ✓ Industrial Fire | ✓ Train Derailment |
| | ✓ Infectious Disease | ✓ Wildfire/Forest Fire |

What types of alerts do not go automatically to air?

Alerts that do not go directly to air are called **Information Alerts**. Information alerts may include any of the above alerts where public safety is not under an immediate threat but where the public may benefit from the information to increase their personal preparedness. They may also include:

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| ✓ Animal Health/Dangerous Animal | ✓ Heavy Rainfall/Thunderstorm | ✓ Public Services (School Lockdowns, Transit/Bridge/Road Closures, Critical Service outages) |
| ✓ Avalanche | ✓ High heat and humidity/Heat Wave | ✓ Storm Surge/High Water |
| ✓ Blood, Food and Drug shortage | ✓ Marine Incidents | ✓ Utility Outages |
| ✓ Emergency Preparedness | ✓ Missing Vulnerable Person | ✓ Volcano effects |
| ✓ Flash Freeze/Cold Wave/Wind Chill/Frost | ✓ Overland Flood | ✓ Wind/Dust Storm |
| ✓ Freezing Rain/Drizzle | ✓ Plant Infectious Disease | ✓ Winter Storm/Ice |
| ✓ Hazardous Materials | ✓ Product Safety | |

Who can send alerts?

Authorized Users will be able to issue a large range of alerts on any hazard ranging from minor incidents to potential severe, life-threatening events. Emergency management personnel must be nominated by their municipality or First Nation. They must complete annual training provided by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA). These trained Authorized Users will be provided with personal and secure access to the web-based Alberta Emergency Alert program. Using a normal internet connection, Authorized Users can issue a warning for their area.

General Program Information for Communities

Users will include local government officials, First Nation representatives and key emergency management personnel within communities throughout Alberta. Some provincial and federal government, such as Environment Canada (severe weather) and Alberta Environment (flow forecasting) will also use Alberta Emergency Alert. Alberta police departments may also use Alberta Emergency Alert to issue an AMBER Alert when a child or an adult with a proven mental or physical disability has been abducted and it is believed that his/her life is in grave danger.

How do I become an Authorized User?

Authorized Users must first be designated by their municipality (and fill out a designation form). The AEMA offers training to designated individuals for Alberta Emergency Alert.

How many Authorized Users should my community have?

Not all members of a community will have access to Alberta Emergency Alert. Communities should ensure they have enough Authorized Users for adequate coverage through holidays, sickness and events of extended duration. Communities should also consider that Authorized Users will require access to an internet connection. Each municipal office or emergency management committee should maintain a list of all Authorized Users and their contact information.

When and where will Alberta Emergency Alert training take place?

Initial Authorized User training for Alberta Emergency Alert will occur July to September 2011 throughout the province. Training will be offered frequently over the three month time period to accommodate vacation schedules. Furthermore, training sessions will again be offered in the winter and onwards and can be arranged by contacting your local AEMA field officer.

What if I am an EPWS (old system) Authorized User?

EPWS Authorized Users, once nominated by their community and trained to use Alberta Emergency Alert, will be switched over to the new system. EPWS Authorized Users will not be automatically switched over to the new system as they MUST first attend Alberta Emergency Alert training.

How much does it cost?

There is no cost for communities to participate in Alberta Emergency Alert. Training is also provided to Authorized Users by the AEMA at no cost. Authorized Users will require an internet connection to issue an alert.

Is liability a concern?

The *Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010*, Part 3, provides liability protection for emergency service providers. Alberta Emergency Alert is designated as an emergency service, carrying out the duties of Alberta Emergency Alert. Section 27 states, "No action lies against the Minister or a person acting under the Minister's direction or authorization for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith while carrying out a power or duty under this *Act* or the regulations."

How is public education being addressed?

The Government of Alberta has established a quarterly live test schedule that allows the public to remain familiar with Alberta's alerting system. This schedule is available at www.aema.alberta.ca.

A public education campaign is also under development and participants are encouraged to assist where possible. The public will be viewing alerts through various mediums. Familiarity is essential for this critical public service to be effective.

Alberta Emergency Alert Program

Office: 780-422-9000

Fax: 780-422-1549

alberta.emergency.alert@gov.ab.ca

www.emergencyalert.alberta.ca

Training Schedule

Registration is required prior to attending a training session.

Please contact Crystal Clarke at crystal.clarke@gov.ab.ca or 780-415-2924 to register. Sessions may fill up quickly so please register early, but no later than 1 week prior to training dates. Dates and times may be subject to change. Users will receive confirmation instructions 1 week prior to the training session.

Session Times: Morning – 8:30am – 12:00pm Afternoon – 1:00pm – 4:30pm Evening – 6:00pm – 9:00pm

North West Region

July 12: Clear Hills (Morning)
July 13: Spirit River (Morning)
July 14: Grande Prairie (Morning)
Aug 9: Peace River (Morning)
Aug 10: Valleyview (Morning)
Sept 8: High Level (to be determined)

North East Region

July 12: Bonnyville (Morning)
July 13: Smoky Lake (Morning)
July 14: Vermilion (Morning)
Aug 17: Lac La Biche (Morning)
Aug 18: Athabasca (Morning)
Sept 7: Fort McMurray (Morning)

North Central Region

July 12: Brazeau County/Drayton Valley (Morning)
July 15: Mayerthorpe (Morning)
July 15: Edmonton (Morning/Afternoon)
July 21: Spruce Grove (Morning)
Aug 11: Yellowhead County/Edson (Morning)
Aug 16: Redwater (Morning)
Sept. 6 & 9: Edmonton (Morning/Afternoon) (To be confirmed)

East Central Region

July 8: Camrose (Morning)
July 28: Provost (Morning)
Aug 18: Paintearth County (Morning)
Aug 19: Vegerville (Morning)
Aug 25: Wainwright (Morning)

Central Region

July 6: Rocky Mountain House (Morning)
July 7: Ponoka (Morning)
July 20: Stettler (Morning)
Aug 11: Innisfail (Morning)
Aug 12: Red Deer (Morning)
Aug 25: Drumheller (Morning)

South Central Region

July 5: Cochrane (Morning)
July 6: Airdrie (Morning)
July 19: Strathmore (Morning)
July 20: Calgary (Morning/Afternoon)
July 27: Oyen (Morning)
Aug 10: Okotoks (Morning)
Aug 23: Brooks (Afternoon)
Aug 24: Hanna (Afternoon)
Sept. 6: Calgary (Afternoon)
Sept. 7: Calgary (Morning/Afternoon)

South Region:

July 5: Pincher Creek (Morning)
July 26: Vulcan (Morning)
Aug 8: Lethbridge (Evening)
Aug 9: Lethbridge (Morning)
Aug 16: Medicine Hat (Morning)
Aug 17: County of Warner (Morning)
Aug 24: Bow Island (Morning)