

Deploying An Effective Emergency Mass Notification Solution

Emergency Mass Notification System (EMNS) technology enables large groups of people to be notified in the event of an actual emergency such as severe weather, earthquakes, active shooter scenarios or medical situations. Such systems are often found within school and college campuses, shopping centers and concert venues, or anywhere people congregate in large numbers. Although an EMNS solution is powerful, it should be in line with an organization's overall Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Being prepared for an incident before it occurs can save lives. It is best if an organization has an EOP in place that provides instructions for step-by-step responses to specific situations. This includes steps for recognizing an emergency, preventative steps to mitigate the scenario if possible, the appropriate response and messaging to address the scenario, and recovery communication once the situation is under control. Strategic planning is critical to ensure emergency broadcasts are set up in advance that provide proper warnings and instructions when an incident occurs. Staff should undergo comprehensive training to ensure those responsible for activating a warning are confident and well-practiced. The messages that are broadcast should be simple and easy to understand and repeat frequently. Finally, it is important to regularly test the system to ensure it will operate properly should an incident occur.

Once an incident has ended it is important to produce an incident report to find out what went right and what could be improved upon. The results of the incident report may produce needed revisions to responses or messaging, including updates to the EOP. This allows for better preparation for the next incident.

There are two types of mass notification, Primary Notification and Secondary Notification. Primary notification includes broadcasting messages via audio and video devices strategically placed throughout a venue or campus. These devices include horns, speakers, computers, monitors, and LED displays among others. Primary warnings are very difficult for the average person to ignore, including people who are hearing or sight impaired.

Secondary notification is the delivery of messages to individual devices such as email or texting platforms. Secondary notification is a critical piece of an overall EMNS program because it connects with individuals who are frequently accessing technology on or off the venue location. However, it cannot be considered a standalone notification platform because most devices depend on wifi technology and cellular networks that may be interrupted during a crisis or severe weather. Educational institutions must follow specific State and Federal regulations that require primary and secondary notifications within their EMNS solutions. Check out this blog article on [Demystifying Primary vs. Secondary Notification](#) for more information.

It's critical to choose a vendor that will provide long-term support for an EMNS solution moving forward. The right vendor will understand the full spectrum of what is needed before, during, and after an incident and develop an EMNS solution that provides the best possible response protocols. Many schools and larger facilities share the challenge of how to alert faculty/staff, students, and visitors located across sprawling facilities. Global CTI's [ACTIVATE – One Touch Emergency Notification System](#) is designed to help overcome this challenge. It compliments almost all distributed recipient outcall

notification system to ensure effective and warnings when personal cell phones are turned off or encounter severe latency due to tower congestion, or simply when emails may go unseen.