



New perils emerge every day Are you prepared?

Threats to public safety run the gamut from pandemics and natural disasters to riots, fires, cyber threats and increasingly, active shooters. When events like these threaten the security and freedom of citizens, public safety professionals like fire fighters, law enforcement and emergency managers are called on to mitigate the danger. You can't stop events like this from happening, but when they do, you can mitigate damage and help keep people safe by communicating clearly. That's where notification can help.

Here are ten ways your agency can prepare for the disruptions caused by public safety threats:

- 1 Gather the right contact data** – Your notification system is only as powerful as your contact database allows. Include email addresses, work phone, home phone, cell phone, pager, home address, fax number, etc., along with the person's title, position, primary location, level of authority, department and duty shifts.
- 2 Develop clear channels of communication** – Even in the midst of a dramatic event, you'll need clear and effective channels of communication to quickly assess damage and coordinate recovery. Use your notification system to alert colleagues, vendors, mutual aid agencies, and department families or groups who may be outside the event, but will still be impacted by your involvement.
- 3 Activate your team** – Use your notification system's conference bridge feature to invite recipients to join a call with one touch on their keypad, creating a virtual conference room in minutes. Bringing key personnel together will help you make critical decisions quickly and gain agreement on how to handle a situation.
- 4 Know who is responding** – Delivering outbound requests for employees and volunteers is only the first step, getting responses back and knowing exactly who can respond takes your notification to the next level. Call only who you need or call everyone, get useful responses, and know who will be on the front line when you need them.
- 5 Create escalation plans** – Crises need immediate response and direction from decision-makers; notification will help implement your escalation process. When delays are inevitable because of catastrophic events, notification can help you meet the challenge by escalating through teams and management until all concerns are addressed and resolved.

- 6 Educate your staff** – Train your personnel on how to use your notification system in the event of an incident so they can send alerts and understand how to monitor the entire alert process. Studies show that agencies who educate their employees correctly before an event happens get better, more meaningful response and reaction rates.
- 7 Educate the public** – If you are using the system to alert the public, you must train them on what to expect. Run tests, have links to register for the system on your website, and spread the word that the system is in place to protect them in case of an emergency.
- 8 Test your plan and systems** – Test your alert system regularly and address any glitches quickly. Many agencies test as often as twice a month to make sure that staff is familiar with the system and that contact data is current—both essential when an event develops.
- 9 Establish a post-event follow-up plan** – An incident can continue to take a toll even after it has ended, so your plan should outline procedures not only for recovery, but also for follow up. A final message once a situation is resolved will help refocus your staff on productivity, and will let their families and other interested parties know that everyone involved is safe.
- 10 Review, evaluate and adapt** – Once your plan has been tested by an event, send a notification that elicits comments from agency employees to find out what worked and what didn't. This will not only garner useful planning tips for the next event, but will let your employees know that you value their observations.

Use your notification system wisely to keep your agency on track and your responders informed, no matter what the emergency. Learn more about how you can keep your agency running smoothly with the help of notification at www.mir3.com.

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