



Help wrangle wildfires with notification

Wildfires are unpredictable by nature, and when they encroach on urban areas they can be deadly. Even if a wildfire is not threatening your building, it's smart to have a plan in place for the other disruptions it can impose on your business. Impacts can include production lags due to reduced employee attendance, airport closures, shipping delays and more. Along with standard emergency procedures, your business continuity plan should designate a way to reach staff when the usual communication infrastructure is down. That's where emergency notification can help. A reliable automated notification system can improve response times, helping to minimize damage and save lives when emergencies threaten.

Use these tips for getting the most out of your notification system when wildfires threaten:

- 1 Understand your BC/DR needs** – When a wildfire starts, the faster the word gets out the better the chance of swiftly managing the blaze. Businesses and municipalities should be prepared with an automated notification system in place to communicate with employees, citizens and first responders.
- 2 Establish clear channels of communication** – In the midst of a wildfire threat you'll need clear and effective channels of communication to quickly assess damage and coordinate recovery. Use notification to alert colleagues, vendors, partners and customers who may be outside the fire's path, but will still be impacted by your business interruption.
- 3 Choose a system with lots of options** – Be sure your system can deliver an important message through every possible channel, including phone, fax, SMS, Blackberry PIN-to-PIN, email, and more. This becomes critical when you really need to reach people with urgent information and the usual communication infrastructure is compromised.
- 4 Make sure all your contact data is up to date** – Regularly check your contact lists to make sure that when a fire threatens, all of your important messages are delivered to the right people on the devices they are most likely to have at hand.
- 5 Prepare escalation plans** – When an event impacts your operations, specific people need to be contacted as soon as possible while others can be alerted once decisions are made. With an automated notification system you can create groups and hierarchies to control message delivery and see that staff is given relevant information in times of crises.

- 6 **Educate your personnel** – Train your personnel on how to use notification systems, including how to respond appropriately, so they can help in the alert process. Companies who educate employees get significantly greater response rates.
- 7 **Test your plan and systems** – Many companies test as often as twice a month to make sure that staff is familiar with the system and that contact data is current. Test your alert system during normal business hours and address any glitches to be certain it will work when needed.
- 8 **Encourage everyone to sign-up for notifications** – Whether it's your town or your business, you can only reach those who share their information. Regularly request that your people check their contact information to make sure it's current. This will help to ensure the reliable and speedy delivery of important messages at the right time, to the right person, on the right device.
- 9 **Establish a post-event follow-up plan** – A fire can continue to take a toll even after the smoke has cleared, so your business continuity plan should outline procedures not only for recovery, but also for followup. A final update once a situation is resolved will help refocus your staff on productivity.
- 10 **Review, evaluate and adapt** – Once the blaze has been extinguished, gather your team for a review of what worked and what didn't. Make plans now on what you can do differently next time. A review will often help organizations to return to normal quickly and will help them be better prepared for wildfires in the future.

Wildfires can be explosive and chaotic. Be prepared ahead of time with an automated notification system. Keep lines of communication open throughout the lifecycle of a blaze to help save lives and property. Learn more about emergency notification at www.mir3.com.

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