



Boulder ODM

Alert and Warning

The first step in being able to take action during a disaster is to know that one is occurring. Alert and warning emergency notifications will help you get the info you'll need to stay as safe as possible during times of disaster.

How Emergency Notifications Work

During a disaster, the leadership structure established in the field is known as Incident Command. This person or group of people work to assess the situation and make the decision on if and when to send emergency notifications. Once the decision to send a notification has been made they work through the respective Communication Center for the affected area to send alerts through various platforms like phones, radios, etc. to those who may face potential impact.

Remember, during a disaster your intuition is always your first alert! If you feel at risk, don't wait to receive a formal alert - taking early action and trusting your gut is your first line of defense!



Signing-Up for Notifications

To receive messages via cell phone, text, or e-mail in Boulder County you must sign-up for notifications (land lines are an exception, as they are automatically registered in our notification system).

Visit www.BOCOAlert.org to sign-up for alerts or modify your account. When signing-up you can edit your profile to add up to five addresses for locations like your home, place of work, schools, etc. so that you can receive alerts for a variety of locations that may have importance to you.

You can also scan this QR code with the camera on a smart phone to jump directly to the sign-up page.



Notification Types

Advisory: Issued to raise awareness about a possible situation, like the potential for an evacuation, severe weather, etc. and sent to areas that would potentially be affected.

Warning: Issued to prepare residents to take action.

Order: Issued when residents must take action immediately and follow the notification action directive given in the order.

Notification Actions

Once you get an order, what do you do? The following are the various types of actions that you may be directed to take.

Climb to higher ground: This may be as simple as scurrying up a hillside in the immediate vicinity, and can save your life in flooding emergencies.

Evacuation: Most commonly used during wildfire, but may be used for law enforcement or hazmat situations when public safety officials need you to leave an area.

Shelter-in-place: Issued for law enforcement situations or emergencies when public safety officials determine it is safer for the community to remain indoors.

Missing/endangered person(s): Public safety officials may send this notification if they need the community to be aware of a missing or endangered person.

All clear: A follow-up to previous messages issued after public safety officials determine the hazard has been mitigated and no longer presents a threat to the community.



Boulder ODM

Alert and Warning

Types of Emergency Notification

Outdoor Warning Sirens

- Intended for people who are outdoors, and broadcasts a voice message immediately following the siren to notify people of a variety of hazards. When you hear a siren sound you should follow up by visiting www.boulderodm.gov for more information.

NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radios

- Reaches anyone who has a weather radio in range of signal. Weather radios broadcast information from the National Weather Service in regards to warnings, watches, forecasts, and also share non-weather related emergency messages.

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

- Reaches anyone listening to radio or watching TV when the notification is sent out. These warnings provide notifications on weather and hazards and are initiated by various senders including the National Weather Service, local officials, state officials, or the president.

Door to Door

- Intended for anyone who may be home during the time of notification – first responders go door to door to notify residents of the situation. This method is only used when there is enough time and personnel to make these notifications happen.

Mobile Apps

- There are a variety of mobile apps that can provide helpful information; these include apps like the ReachWell app that provides alerts in over 100 languages, as well as local news station apps, or weather apps.

Opt-In Phone Systems

- Boulder County uses an opt-in notification system called Everbridge. These notifications are sent through cell phones, land lines, and e-mail. This system allows our Communications Center to send relevant alerts to specifically targeted geographical areas. Everbridge is an opt-in system for cell and e-mail notifications (landline phones are automatically added and receive alerts without users needing to register).

Wireless Emergency Alerts

- Reaches anyone with a cell phone that is connected with any of the cell phone towers within a specific geographic area that is chosen for the alert. This means that you don't have to register, but that the notifications are pushed to you automatically based on your location.

Additional Information Sources

Boulder ODM Website

The Boulder ODM website is a great resource and has multiple language translations available. For information in languages other than English, visitors can select a language in the "Select Language" drop down in the upper right-hand corner of the site. Some of the features we encourage people to use to raise their understanding of an incident are the following buttons:

- View Recent Emergency Alerts – shows you notifications that have been sent via Everbridge (our opt-in notification system).
- Emergency Updates – shows you a running feed of updates about weather and hazard advisories, watches, or orders – like evacuation, shelter-in-place, etc.
- Public Information Map – interactive map where you can see information about disasters that may be occurring. This map also allows you to search an address to see if you're in an effected area.

Social Media

Boulder County has staff who post updates during times of disaster via social media – you can follow Boulder ODM on Twitter (@BoulderODM) or visit the Boulder ODM Facebook for information. Boulder ODM website visitors can link to our social media on the upper right corner of the site, or by searching Boulder Office of Disaster Management on either Twitter or Facebook.

