

# Test for Peace of Mind

A full and repeatable test cycle will help ensure your organization's alerting readiness.

If your organization has an emergency notification service in place, you've already taken an important step toward communicating faster and more effectively in critical situations. But if the solution is not routinely updated and tested, you could still be at risk in an actual emergency. A full and repeatable test cycle will help ensure your organization's alerting readiness.

**Consider the following recommendations for testing and exercising your notification service and program:**

**SET A REGULAR TESTING SCHEDULE AND STICK WITH IT:** It's important to test your emergency notification service on a regular basis. Activate your system frequently (daily or at least weekly) with a small group of administrators or other participants. Conduct widespread exercises at least twice a year to ensure recipient familiarity with notifications and procedures.

**TESTING ISN'T JUST FOR USERS:** Allow your entire alerting population, i.e., leadership, employees, volunteers, suppliers and other stakeholders, to experience a test alert. This way, you will not catch them off guard when and if an actual emergency notification is initiated.







**THINK “WORST-CASE”:** Large-scale events require immediate, high-volume alerting. Know your emergency notification service can support communications with your full alerting population through a complete technical analysis. Be sure to “white list” IP addresses and domains and use call throttling to avoid overloading your company’s internal telephony system.

**STAND READY:** Have personnel on-site to observe your alerting population during an activation, particularly the full system tests. Review all feedback and make any necessary modifications to pre-defined notification scenarios, contact data, etc. If you do not currently use a Self-Registration Portal through which people can provide and update their emergency contact information, consider its implementation. It will make your job easier and your emergency notification service more effective.

**RE-EDUCATE PEOPLE:** If you do make changes to your alerting service or testing procedures, it’s important to make everyone aware. Obviously, the more knowledgeable people — employees, management and other stakeholders — are of your organization’s critical communications practices and procedures, the better off they (and it) will be during a critical event. These simple, but important actions will carry you a long way down the path to resilience.