

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
BOARD POLICY**

POLICY: Voyent Alert! Usage

AUTHORITY: Board Resolution dated September 7, 2023.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) use the Voyent Alert! communication service and alerting app in a consistent manner when sending Informational Notifications and Critical Alerts.

PURPOSE

To provide clarity around the consistent use of Voyent Alert! when issuing Informational Notifications and Critical Alerts.

DEFINITIONS

Board of Directors means the Board of Directors for the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Critical Alerts means communications for critical events such as wildfires, flooding, landslides, rockslides, critical water notices, or other emergencies that could threaten life safety.

EOC: Emergency Operations Centre

EOC Director Individual appointed to oversee the operation of the Emergency Operations Centre

Informational Notifications means non-critical, non-emergency, or routine communications such as garbage and recycling information, water (non-emergency) and sewer notices, planning/rezoning, and public engagement opportunities.

~~Water Notifications Alert Utilities~~ **Administrator** means individual(s) within the ~~Engineering Department~~ Public Works Division of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen delegated the responsibility for preparing and issuing water notifications as approved by the RDOS Senior Manager of Public Works Utilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Critical Alerts:

~~The~~ RDOS Communications section will ensure all staff using Voyent Alert! are trained and have access to templates, policy, and procedure documents. The EOC Information Section Chief will ensure Critical Alerts are reviewed by the EOC Director prior to distribution.

~~Regional District~~~~The~~ Board of Directors will be sent advance notice via email prior to distribution of Critical Alerts, when time permits.

Informational Notifications:

Senior Managers will ensure Informational Notifications, ~~such as information releases and posters being released by their departments~~which are prepared based on approved templates, are reviewed for accuracy prior to distribution.

PROCEDURES

Critical Alerts

1. A Critical Alert will be issued when a real or perceived threat to life safety exists within the RDOS or an evacuation alert, evacuation order, shelter-in-place, rescind, or test is required, as determined by the following individuals:
 - a. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
 - b. EOC Director ~~/or~~ Deputy Director
 - c. EOC Information Section Lead ~~Chief~~
 - d. Emergency Services Manager or Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC)
The EPC would make the call in the absence of the EOC Director, Deputy Director, or Emergency Services Manager based on the severity of the situation.
 - e. ~~Senior Managers~~ Managing Directors
The Managing Director would make a recommendation to one of the individuals listed above.
 - f. EOC Information Section Lead
The EOC Information Section Lead would issue the critical notification on direction from an individual listed above and would make the call in their absence based on the severity of the situation.
2. A threat to life safety includes any situation that requires a person to take action by evacuating their home or property, preparing to evacuate, or sheltering-in-place, and includes the following events:
 - a. Wildfire
 - b. Flood
 - c. Landslide
 - d. Hazardous materials incident
 - e. Water emergencies – Do not consume/do not use
 - f. Other emergencies as determined by the individuals listed in section 1 above.
3. In an active EOC event, the individuals listed in section 1 above will consult with the on-scene incident commander(s), if applicable, to determine the need for issuing of a Critical Alert.
4. Critical Alerts are drafted by the EOC Information Section, Emergency Program Coordinator, Communications Coordinator, or RDOS Utilities ~~water notification alert a~~ Administrator ~~(for water emergencies only)~~, using predetermined templates which will contain the following information:
 - a. Notification Severity - Critical
 - b. Alert Issuer
 - c. Subject
 - d. Description, including the following:
 - a. Type of alert, description of impacted area, electoral area, effective date of issue, effective time of issue in standard time, reason for alert
 - e. Instructions for alert recipients, including the following:
 - a. Critical information for recipients, such as:
 - i. Immediate action(s) required
 - b. Website and phone number for further information
 - f. Additional Information (not included in SMS or Voice Call notifications), including the following:
 - a. Attachment of signed Evacuation Order, Evacuation Alert, or other relevant documentation
5. Critical Alerts are issued by the RDOS Emergency Operations Centre under the discretion of the EOC Director. Critical Alerts include Evacuation Alerts, Orders, ~~and~~ Rescinds, Shelter in Place, and potential threats to public health and safety that fall within the role of the RDOS EOC.

The ~~RDOS Senior Manager of Utilities~~Managing Director – Development and Infrastructure Services or designate, or another manager in their absence, may direct the ~~water notification~~Utilities administrator or RDOS Communications (Corporate Services) to issue notifications based on threats to public safety such as ‘do not consume’ or ‘do not use’.

Informational Notifications

6. An Informational Notification will be issued in the following situations:
- a. EOC ~~informational updates under the discretion of the EOC Director~~activation due to wildfire, flood, or other emergency
 - b. Provincial road or highway closure or area restriction, when information is received from that agency and impacts RDOS residents and travellers
 - ~~b-c.~~ General service notices
 - ~~c-d.~~ Community information and RDOS public engagement opportunities sent to the Electoral Area or specific service area if a KMZ file is available (including events, surveys, and meetings)
 - e. Land use change advisories
 - i. Bylaw amendment applications (rezoning and public hearings)
 - ii. Temporary Use Permit applications
 - ~~i-iii.~~ Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Brand applications
 - ~~d-f.~~ Non-emergency w~~Water~~ system advisories ~~(non-emergency)~~(e.g. boil water, rescind)
 - ~~e-g.~~ Sewer Wastewater system (Sewer) advisories
 - ~~f-h.~~ Garbage and recycling service advisories
 - ~~g-i.~~ Parks, trails, and recreation advisories

7. Informational Notifications criteria and radius

- a. Minimum 100 metre radius (refer to Development Procedures Bylaw No. 2500, 2011, Section 5.1.3 Scheduling a Public Information Meeting.

~~7-8.~~ Informational Notifications are ~~drafted-prepared~~ by ~~notification a~~designated Voyent Alert! Administrators, including Communications Coordinators and the Utilities Administrator for each department or RDOS Communications, and, Informational Notifications will contain the following information:

- a. Notification severity – informational
- b. Recipient group(s) – as listed in section 6 above
- c. Alert Issuer
- d. Subject
- e. Description, including the following information:
 - i. Type of notification, description of impacted area, electoral area, effective date of issue, effective time of issue in standard time, reason for alert
- f. Instructions for notification recipients, including the following information:
 - i. Action required or suggested for recipients to follow
 - ii. Hyperlinked website and phone number for further information
- g. Additional Information (not included in SMS or Voice Call notifications), including the following information:
 - i. Attachment of relevant documentation where applicable

Non-permitted Uses

~~8-9.~~ The Voyent Alert! notification service and alerting app will not be used in the following situations:

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- a. Third-party notifications, events, products, or services, ~~such as BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) or the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI).~~ Other than information referenced in 6 b above.
 - b. Communication that is the responsibility of other agencies, such as municipal or First Nations emergency events, unless directed by the community to provide support. Links to provincial partners, such as BC Wildfire Service or Ministry of Transportation and Transit, may be shared for reference.
 - c. Communication that solicits purchase of products or services, or paid program registration.