

BROWARD COUNTY
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR EMPLOYEES
Revised May 23, 2011

PURPOSE

The Broward County Emergency Communication Plan for Employees was established to ensure there is a coordinated and effective plan to communicate general emergency information, work status and work assignments to Broward County employees before, during and after an emergency.

OVERVIEW

Effective employee communication during an emergency is of utmost importance and requires the support of the entire organization. Multiple communication methods will be used in order to have redundancy in case of technology failures due to emergency or other catastrophic conditions. The Emergency Communication Plan describes the communication methods that will be utilized and delegates responsibilities to agencies and to the workforce in general to ensure the success of the program.

Good communication must include inbound and outbound information capabilities: management to employees and employees to management. Advance planning and a comprehensive employee education effort are both key to the effectiveness of the program.

During emergencies, Broward County may be under a Declaration of Emergency issued by Board of County Commissioners, or if a regular or special meeting cannot practically be convened, by the Broward County Mayor, in consultation with the County Administrator. In such situations, the County Administrator has broad authority during the response and recovery operations to reassign the resources of the organization to missions that protect the health and safety of Broward County residents and visitors. Work assignments and reporting structures may change rapidly depending on response plan assignments. The communication plan must be flexible and be able to respond to these changing needs, as well as have the capacity to communicate to all employees and not just those employees who have advance emergency assignments.

TYPES OF NOTIFICATIONS

County E-mail System – The County’s e-mail system has the capability to send a group e-mail to every employee on the network. This includes approximately two thirds of the workforce. In addition, departments, divisions and work teams can use e-mail throughout an emergency by creating sub-groups for e-mail distribution. The County’s e-mail system is an effective tool; however, additional communications methods must be used to reach those employees that do not have an e-mail account and those that are not able to access their e-mail due to assignments in the field and/or technology failures.

Calling Tree or Fan Out Alert – Fan out alerts and/or calling trees are used to contact employees by telephone. This system requires employees to have a designated list of employees they are responsible for calling and then those employees call other employees, etc. This system has been used effectively during emergencies. Each County agency should have a telephone list of their employees and a description of the process to be used for the Fan Out Alert as part of their emergency procedures. This communication method works well to provide specific information regarding individual work assignments.

Employee Hotline Number – During emergencies the Human Resources Division is responsible for recording messages to communicate general information through an employee hotline. The telephone number designated for the employee hotline is 954-831-8589. General information messages are updated throughout an emergency. The time and date of the message is announced and the information is updated as necessary. An updated message will be recorded at least twice a day even if the message is to say the status remains unchanged. The message is typically general and short in length, but may contain specific department information.

County Call Center – The County Call Center functions as the County’s emergency information hotline when the Emergency Operations Center is activated. The Call Center will be provided information to respond to general employee questions during an emergency. In addition, the Call Center will accept call back message requests from employees whose emergency contact information has been changed due to emergency conditions. These messages will be distributed to the Division director for handling. County agencies can provide the Call Center information to disseminate that is specific to an agency; however, a contact phone number must be provided for employee referral.

Media – The media, including television and radio, will broadcast general employee information announcements. Employees are encouraged to monitor television and radio reports for return to work and other announcements.

Web Site- An employee Web site, accessible from the www.broward.org home page will be expanded during emergencies to include pertinent emergency information. In addition to general announcements, the Web site will provide agency specific information.

Other Means – Employees are encouraged to subscribe to other updates issued by Broward County during an emergency, including the Hurricane Update eMail System, and Twitter @ ReadyBroward.

EMERGENCY EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

1. Educate Employees About the Plan

The best communication plan will not be effective unless it is understood and carried out by everyone involved.

A. Office of Public Communications Responsibilities:

- Publish articles about the communication plan prior to hurricane season each year in employee newsletters and on the BC-Net.
- Post the Emergency Communications Plan for Employees on Broward County's Web site.
- Provide information about the communications plan in the Hurricane Hotline Volunteer training.
- Provide posters to agencies for placement in employee breakrooms.

B. County Agency Responsibilities:

- Educate employees about the contents of the plan in staff meetings and inter-agency newsletters.
- Refer to the "Emergency Communications Plan for Employees" in agency standard operating procedures.
- Include information in new employee orientation meetings about the plan.
- Ensure every employee receives information materials about the plan.

C. Employee Responsibilities:

- All employees are required to read the Emergency Communications Plan for Employees and provide their emergency contact information to their supervisor.

2. Gather Employee Contact Information

Gathering and updating employee information on a scheduled basis is critical for the success of the notification system. The following activities are required:

- A. Each agency must maintain an employee emergency contact list. The following employee information should be included:
 - First and Last name
 - Address
 - Home Telephone Number
 - Work Telephone Number
 - Work Cell Phone Number
 - Personal Cell Phone Number (optional for text messaging)
 - Personal eMail Address (optional for emailing)
- B. The Emergency Management Division will send out reminder notices to all agencies in May and November to update emergency contact information.
- C. Payroll liaisons are requested to input the employee information into Cyborg.
- D. Agencies should encourage employees to report changes throughout the year to their payroll liaisons.
- E. Each agency is required to maintain an employee emergency contact list in a format that can be distributed for employee fan out alerts, call trees and other employee notifications.

3. Communication During an Emergency

During an activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC):

- A. The following are examples of actions that would necessitate general employee notification messages:
 - Closing County Government
 - Evacuation Orders
 - Report to work announcementsThe Office of Public Communications will coordinate with the Emergency Management Division to distribute these messages.
- B. Agencies should utilize their employee fan out alerts, call trees and other employee notifications as appropriate.
- C. The Call Center will distribute information as provided by individual agencies to employees.
- D. The Human Resources Division will record employee announcements on the Employee Hotline as needed. An updated message, including the date and time, will be recorded at least twice a day even if the message is to say the status remains unchanged.
- E. County employees are expected to engage in proactive communication with their supervisors regarding their work status.