



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the National Safety Council (NSC) Emergency Alert Network?

The Emergency Alert Network was developed to help our nation respond to a *declared public safety or health emergency*. As a part of the CDC Business Emergency Communication Network, the purpose is to “push” or send critical health and safety information and instructions to NSC members. This is to assist organizations in response to emergencies and to protect the health and well-being of customers and employees.

Who is eligible to participate in this network?

All active members of the NSC may participate in this network. Active members are requested to identify and enroll one emergency contact for their member company.

In a declared emergency, how does the network work?

The NSC receives an emergency message from the CDC with official information and recommendations. NSC activates the Emergency Alert Network.

Via the network, NSC then transmits an emergency message to the emergency contact for each participating member company. Depending on the delivery format, the communication will include the official (unaltered) CDC message or links to the information. This information will also be posted on the NSC Emergency Alert Network. <http://alerts.nsc.org>. The NSC member company then uses this information to guide its own crisis communication and emergency plans.

What types of situations will activate this network?

The network will only be during a declared public safety or health emergency and situations of national or regional significance that threaten the health or safety of large segments of the population. These situations may include public health threats, such as:

- Pandemic influenza
- The spread of an infectious agent or biological toxin
- Natural disaster
- Chemical attack or accidental release
- Nuclear attack or accident

It is important to note that hazards may be:

- Isolated regionally, national, or global in scope
- Of limited duration or occur in prolonged waves
- Preventable and treatable through vaccines and medications, or there may be no pharmaceutical interventions available

Who can activate this network?

Presently, the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Director of the CDC may declare a situation a public safety or health emergency. The Director of the CDC may determine it is in the best interest of the nation to send a message to NSC to activate our network.

How will this network differ from other emergency management alerts?

This network will convey **official CDC** information and recommendations for situations of national or regional significance that threaten the health or safety of large segments of the population. The network will not notify you of emergencies that are local in nature, such as tornados; or that can be managed by existing public health and emergency management systems. The information will be specific to the emergency situation and provide recommended actions for businesses and employers.

Your company may receive additional alerts from other state and local emergency operations or networks

What information will I receive?

Your organization will receive information and instructions. This message will include:

- The nature of the emergency situation
- The risk of exposure, preventive measures, and how to seek treatment when needed
- Recommended actions for businesses

Throughout the emergency, the network will be used to inform NSC members about the current situation. On-going reports and updates will be posted at <http://alerts.nsc.org>. A new emergency alert message will be transmitted to emergency contacts if the CDC revises or makes new recommendations for response.

What are the benefits of network participation?

You receive the benefit of time. You will receive credible information from official sources. Time and information can help your company make decisions and implement your emergency plan.

Decisions and early actions taken by your company can:

- Protect the health and safety of employees and customers
- Prevent or reduce the severity of the emergency's impact
- Assist in recovering more quickly from the situation

What is the cost to participate?

Network participation is free to all active National Safety Council members as a member benefit.

Is enrollment automatic?

Yes, all National Safety Council members are automatically enrolled in the Emergency Alert Network. Each primary member contact person will receive instructions and a link to enroll one emergency contact in the network. New members, as they join, will receive instructions and a link to enroll their emergency contact in the network.

How will I be contacted?

The Emergency Alert Network will utilize the following types of communications: email, text message, automated phone message, and fax. Email alert is the default selection.

On the enrollment webpage, the emergency contact person can identify how to be contacted by the network. The emergency contact can prioritize which methods to use depending on time of day or day of the week.

How often will I be contacted?

The emergency contact will receive two on-going communications from the Emergency Alert Network.

1. A quarterly self-update notification email with a secure link requesting the emergency contact update or verify no changes to their contact records in the network.
2. A quarterly system test message from the Emergency Alert Network.

During a declared emergency, the network would deliver emergency notifications. Network system tests will be suspended for the duration of the declared emergency situation.

Who should be the emergency contact for my member company?

The emergency contact for your organization should be:

- Knowledgeable about your business operations and critical processes
- Able to assess a variety of emergency situations and understand the implications of how an emergency situation may impact your company
- Authorized to implement your company's crisis communication and emergency plans and/or able to access key leaders within your organization in an emergency

Can I designate more than one emergency contact for my member company?

No. At this time, each member company may designate only one emergency contact. Below are some options that your company may use to internally distribute emergency notifications.

Set Up an Emergency Notifications Email Address

Create this mailbox to automatically forward messages received to a pre-set emergency distribution list for your company. This is easy to set up and allows notifications to reach recipients.

24-hour Dispatch or Operations Centers

If your company has a 24-hour dispatch or operations center, you can opt to have it receive notification from the Emergency Alert Network and internally distribute this information.

What is expected of the emergency contact person?

Expectations of the emergency contact include:

Prior to activation:

1. Provide contact information to the NSC Emergency Alert Network through self update email notices.
2. Identify an alternate contact person for when you are out of the country, on vacation, etc.

During network activation:

1. Assess emergency situations and the impact on your company's business operations.
2. Communicate the situation and recommended actions to management.
3. Implement your company's crisis communication and emergency plan.

During system testing:

1. Participate in system testing.
2. Validate receipt of test messages.
3. Provide feedback to improve the NSC Emergency Alert Network.

Why am I being asked to provide information about my industry?

For certain emergency situations, the CDC may request notification to and provide recommendations for a specific industry sector or region of the country. This may be to prevent the spread of an outbreak or to allow certain industries time to prepare operationally for an increased demand in critical services or products.

What if my company has facilities located in more than one state or in other countries?

You may choose to receive notification for the entire United States or select specific U.S. regions. At this time, emergency notification is limited to public health threats that will impact the U.S. and its territories.

What happens if there is a change in personnel for my company's designated emergency contact?

Your organization's emergency contact information can be changed by visiting <http://members.nsc.org> and selecting the Emergency Alert Network from the Key Initiatives drop down menu.

How can I change or update my company's designated emergency contact person or information?

Your organization's emergency contact information can be changed by visiting <http://members.nsc.org> and selecting the Emergency Alert Network from the Key Initiatives drop down menu.

Can I opt out of the network?

Yes, a member company may opt out of the network; however, it is strongly encouraged that all NSC member companies participate in this free member benefit. Members can opt out of the network by going to <http://members.nsc.org> and selecting the Emergency Alert Network from the Key Initiatives drop down menu.

What should I do with the information I receive from the network?

You may use this information to implement or adapt your company's emergency plans. The information is intended to help your company make decisions about its business operations and to protect the health of its customers, employees, and their families.

Will the Emergency Alert Network be tested?

The Emergency Alert Network will be tested four times each year. At least one test will be conducted after standard U.S. business hours. The network will be activated by sending a system test message to each individual listed as an emergency contact. Emergency contacts will receive a message for each communication option selected.

What is the role of an emergency contact during a test?

During the quarterly system testing, the emergency contact will receive a test message and instructions on how to validate receipt of the test message. Validation of the test message by the emergency contact helps NSC to identify and correct problems in the network. Emergency contacts are encouraged to use network system tests as an opportunity to test their organization's own emergency plans and systems.

Why is it important that I participate in system tests?

It is important that all emergency contacts participate in the quarterly system test by validating receipt of the test message. Your participation in a test helps us to identify and correct any technical problems in message delivery. Your participation also ensures that your company will receive this critical information during a declared public safety or health emergency.

Does my company need an emergency plan to participate in the network and system tests?

No, your company does not need an emergency plan to participate in the network; however creating emergency and crisis communication plans can be the difference in your company and its employees surviving the emergency situation.

What is a self update notification?

The NSC Emergency Alert Network will email a self update notification to emergency contacts listed in the network. A self update notification will be emailed each quarter prior to the quarterly system test.

The self update notification is an email request generated by Send Word Now – NSC’s emergency notification system. The email will contain a secure link to your contact record reminding you to update your telephone number and email address in your Emergency Alert Network profile. A member webcast demonstrates how to change your contact information through the self update notification feature. To view this recording, visit <http://members.nsc.org> and selecting the Emergency Alert Network from the Key Initiatives drop down menu.

The email will reference the following sender and subject topic:

From: NSC Emergency Alert Network [swnaalert@sendwordnow.com]

Subject: Request - Please update your Send Word Now profile

Please add the NSC Emergency Alert Network, sendwordnow.com and sendwordnow.net to your trusted sender profiles in your organization’s spam and email filters.

Why am I receiving this notice?

The quarterly self update notification will help NSC keep our emergency contact records as accurate as possible in the event that the NSC Emergency Alert Network is activated. If needed, your emergency contact information can be changed by visiting <http://members.nsc.org> and selecting the Emergency Alert Network from the Key Initiatives drop down menu.

Where can I find additional information?

For more information about the Emergency Alert Network, visit <http://members.nsc.org> and select the Emergency Alert Network from the Key Initiatives drop down menu.