

News Release

Jan. 16, 2018

Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management Emergency Alerting System Capabilities

UNION GAP – The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management has the capability to issue emergency notifications, activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS), and send Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) within Yakima County. The local emergency notification system, referred to as Alert Yakima is powered by the Everbridge software platform, a world leader in mass notification systems.

You can sign-up for the emergency notification system by going to www.YakimaCounty.us/AlertYakima. You are able to enter the specific ways you want to be contacted, such as through the Everbridge mobile app, text messages, phone calls, emails, or even a fax. When signing-up you can enter up to five addresses in Yakima County that you care about. When emergency management draws the area on a map that should receive an emergency alert, the system will grab any contact information associated with addresses in the area they are alerting.

All landline phones in Yakima County are pre-loaded in the system to be used for emergency alerting only. When you sign-up, you can choose to receive additional optional information such as weather alerts and emergency preparedness information. When signing-up, you can also self-identify assistance you may need in the event you were asked to evacuate. If you have signed-up over the past two years, you should log back into the system at the beginning of every year to verify that your information is still accurate.

The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management has the capability activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and send Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) like what was used in the Hawaii accidental message over the weekend. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) send messages to cell phones based off what cell tower you are near. This allows emergency management to send out certain emergency alerts to a wide area and reach most cell phones, including people from out of town. To prevent accidental alerts, the software platform used in Yakima County requires a manual entry of keycodes to activate those systems. Also, the software platform used in Yakima County allows the sender to create brand new messages within minutes. Yakima Valley Emergency Management does conduct monthly tests which goes to a testing network; those messages are always worded that it is a test.

For certain emergencies, such as during a Hazardous Materials incident, you may be asked to shelter in place. More information will be coming on what you should do if you receive a shelter in place order.

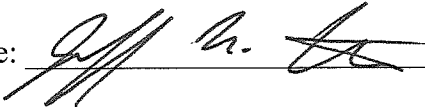
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Public Inquiry: Yakima Valley OEM Joint Information Center, 509-574-1900 Option 1

Approvals

JIC Manager Signature: _____ Date/Time: _____

EOC Manager Signature: _____ Date/Time: _____

OEM Director Signature:  Date/Time: 1/16/18 8:10