



CITY OF TORRANCE

Mark Matsuda
Police Chief

An emergency notification system is a primary part of a larger citizen communications tool kit. The various ways a city can notify its residents include reverse 911 (the direct calling a person's home phone using the 911 database), the emergency alert system (EAS), CitiCABLE, CitiSOUNDS AM 1620, Social Media, or general awareness through the use of the [Community Warning Siren](#) and barricades.

The Torrance Alerts program was created to keep residents informed in the case of disaster or life threatening events. Recently the use of our emergency notification system and procedures were implemented during a real emergency.

A NEW SYSTEM ADDED

This year the City upgraded the citizen notification system (reverse 911), last weekend an incident at the ExxonMobil Refinery in Torrance led to a lot of uneasy residents and a wave of speculation. The decision was made to launch a notification.

Today's modern emergency notification technology can now work faster than the local telephone company's infrastructure can handle. Our service provider has a sophisticated call throttling capability to slow down the outbound calls to a level the phone company's infrastructure can handle--but even that was set a bit too high for the local system which may only be able to handle 200 calls at a time in some areas.

The most important lesson learned from this situation is that in some parts of the city there are phone company infrastructure limitations which only allow for very limited simultaneous calls. We were able to log 186,000 contact attempts in one hour with 180,000 of those being phone calls.

OPT-IN

We encourage all residents to register and "opt-in" at TorranceCA.Gov/TorranceAlerts. We ask the community to provide additional contact information so we can notify them urgently and also

in the case of a life threatening emergency. Using multiple contact paths, such as phone, email and text messages, will improve our ability to more effectively alert them of future incidents and bypass any bottlenecks presented by older landline infrastructure or damaged infrastructure.

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Individuals can enter as many contact paths as they like, set their preferred order for devices to be contacted and select other non-emergency notifications as offered by the City. This program saw an immediate spike of registrations right after the explosion at the plant growing from roughly 3,000 to over 8,000 registrants in 3 days. All residents should assume we may not have accurate contact data for them and that they should create an account and register with as many ways to contact them as possible.

MOBILE APP

ContactBridgemobile app is available for download for Android or iOS (Apple) operating systems. Once a resident registers at TorranceAlerts they are encouraged to download the mobile app if they have a smart phone. To access from your mobile device, the community can use their member ID and Password to register in the mobile app. This provides another, very effective back up contact path for the city to use in case the landline infrastructure is impacted again.

Please register and “opt-in” at www.TorranceCA.Gov/TorranceAlerts