

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

RESPONSIBILITIES

Critical Alerts:

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 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, are reviewed 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)
 - b. EOC Director/Deputy Director
 - c. EOC Information Section Chief
 - d. Emergency Services Manager or Emergency Program Coordinator
 - e. Senior Managers

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, , or RDOS Utilities water notification alert 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, and potential threats to public health and safety that fall within the role of the RDOS EOC.

The RDOS Senior Manager of Utilities, or another manager in their absence, may direct the water notification administrator or RDOS Communications 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
 - b. General service notices
 - c. Community information and public engagement opportunities (including events, surveys, and meetings)
 - d. Land use change advisories
 - e. Water system advisories (non-emergency)
 - f. Sewer system advisories
 - g. Garbage and recycling service advisories
 - h. Parks, trails, and recreation advisories

7. Informational Notifications are drafted by notification administrators for each department or RDOS Communications, and 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. 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. The Voyent Alert! communication service and alerting app will not be used in the following situations:
 - a. Third-party notifications, events, products, or services, such as BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) or the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI).
 - b. Communication that is the responsibility of other agencies.
 - c. Communication that solicits purchase of products or services, or paid program registration.