



EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

SEVERE WEATHER MESSAGE WORKSHEET

Climate-related disasters jumped 83 percent in the past 20 years according to a study done at [Yale University](#). Major floods have more than doubled, the number of severe storms has risen 40 percent, and there have been rises in droughts, wildfires, and heatwaves.

As these events increase, it is more important than ever that businesses are prepared to protect their employees, customers, and communities. In addition to having a preparedness plan, **drafting communications prior to an event can save valuable time, prevent stress and mitigate danger.**

Extreme weather is a weather event such as snow, rain, drought, flood, or storm that is rare for the place where it occurs. It can develop quickly and unexpectedly, and threaten life and property. The US has some of the most varied types of severe weather.

Rank these events that have the highest risk of impacting your business.

_____ **Blizzard**

_____ **Hurricane**

_____ **Hail**

_____ **Ice storm**

_____ **Heat wave**

_____ **Thunderstorm**

_____ **Heavy rain**

_____ **Tornado**

_____ **High winds**

_____ **Wildfire**

Identifying the types most common to your area, when they usually occur, and considering potential instructions for employees (shelter in place, work from home, evacuate) will help you draft effective templates.



DRAFTING COMMUNICATION TEMPLATES

Particularly with communication, being rushed results in an unclear message. In a stressful emergency situation, drafting messages at the last moment also results in precious seconds being lost, which can sometimes be the difference between safety and danger. Having templates already drafted ensures a clear, thoughtful message can be updated and quickly sent out.

When preparing your communications, you'll want to consider these questions below for each weather event you ranked above. Use the spaces provided to brainstorm and write out details that pertain to your specific organization.

How will you send your messages?

Email, phone/voice, SMS, push notifications are some options. A Mass Notification System can be set up to accommodate all channels you might utilize. Additionally, consider which situations would merit a poll, acknowledgement, or two-way communication (chat).

Who needs to get the messages?

For example, an initial alert may need to be broadcast to all employees, but follow-up messages may only need to be sent to safety team members. For large organizations, notification may only need to be sent to a particular wing, floor or building. A Mass Notification System also has the ability to segment contacts by location, role, or many other aspects, ensuring the right messages reach the right people.

What does your message need to include?

Use clear, concise language but include enough detail for staff to take the appropriate action: Describe the potential danger and where it is taking place; what, when and how to take action (work from home, shelter in place, evaluate), and what's next.

What does your message need to include?

Before the event with instructions on how to prepare; during the event with updates and new instructions; after the event with additional information and an all clear. Again, keep in mind scenarios when you might want to interact more with the recipients using polls, responses, or chat.

TEMPLATE FORMATTING

Depending on your industry and employee roles, reaching them quickly may require using multiple communication channels. Here are some examples of what could be included in a severe weather event communication template before, during, and after an event:



EMAIL

BEFORE

Subject: Office Closure

This is a [company name] company-wide notification.

The [location] office will be closed until [day/date] due to the pending [event: ice storm]. If you are on property, please take laptop computers, cell phones, (critical files?) and chargers home when you leave. If you are not at the property, do not return to the property to retrieve them.

Please contact [manager's name and phone number] with any questions or concerns. Please practice all necessary precautionary measures to keep you and your family safe.

Additional updates and information will be provided as they become available.

DURING

Subject: Office Closure - Update #1

This is a [company name] company-wide notification.

The [location] office will remain closed until [day/date] due to the [event: ice storm]. If you are in need of assistance, please chat with us here [link].

Additional updates and information will be provided as they become available.

AFTER

Subject: UPDATE: [Office location] reopening [date]

The [event: ice storm] has ended and roads are clear. [Office location] will be reopening, [day/date] for regular hours.

Please contact your supervisor if you will be unable to return to the office. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact [contact name an email].



VOICE

BEFORE

Hello. This is [name, title] with a mass alert from [Organization]. The National Weather Service has issued a [event: flash flood] alert for [area] until [time/date]. Monitor [web address] regularly and email and voicemail updates from [organization] until further notice. This message will now repeat.

DURING

Hello. This is [name, title] with a mass alert from [Organization]. A [event: flood] has occurred at [location]. Evacuate all [Organization] buildings and remain in shelter at [location] until further notice. No entrance to evacuated areas is allowed. For additional information and updates go to [Emergency Website Address]. This message will now repeat.

AFTER

Hello. This is [name, title] with a mass alert from [Organization]. {Official} has declared employees may return to [location]. If you are unable to return or have questions, please contact [contact name/number]. This message will now repeat.



SMS

BEFORE

A [event: wildfire] alert has been issued for the county until [date]. Please monitor [website] for current information.

DURING

This is an emergency notification for [Company name/Location]. There is a [event: wildfire] at [location]. At this time, we suggest all employees [remain within their work area and wait for further instructions / head to the closest shelter]. We will provide further updates as information becomes available. Please click here [link] to acknowledge you have read this message. For any immediate safety or security concerns, please [reply to this message /call 911/ call Building Security at x].

AFTER

[Event: wildfire] update: Employees may return to [location]. Proper company ID will be required. If you are unable to return, please [reply to this message].



TEAMS ALERT/PUSH NOTIFICATION

BEFORE

A [event: tornado warning] is in effect for [specific location] for [duration]. Please shelter in place immediately until [time] or otherwise notified.

DURING

A [event: tornado is on the ground] at [location]. To protect your life, TAKE COVER NOW! Move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows. If in a mobile home, a vehicle, or outdoors, move to the closest substantial shelter and protect yourself from flying debris.

For any immediate safety or security concerns, please [reply to this message / call 911 / call Building Security at X].

AFTER

The [event: tornado] has passed and [location] is [affected/unaffected]. Please answer the poll below to confirm your safety status. Employees may return to buildings at [day/time]. Contact [name] with any questions [number].

THOUGHTFUL PREPARATION CAN CHANGE THE OUTCOME

"When disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed." Steven Cyros

A good emergency plan with communication templates is kind of like insurance - you hope you never need it, but are so grateful if you ever do. Drafting communications prior to a severe weather event can reduce stress and save precious moments when they matter most.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

You can easily deliver action oriented notifications
to groups of any size via text, voice, email,
Microsoft Teams, and more.

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