

AGENDA ITEM NO: 7.1

MEETING DATE: April 18, 2023

STAFF REPORT – COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: Public Alerting System Policy DATE: April 12, 2023

DEPARTMENT: Communications PREPARED BY: Jamie Leggatt

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The City of Chilliwack will implement Alertable, a public notification system to send emergency alerts, starting in May 2023. Alertable will be used, in addition to current methods, to issue alerts for emergencies where the City is the alerting authority. The policy directive establishes procedures for designated staff to use when accessing, maintaining and operating the City's public alerting system.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the presentation on the "Public Alerting System" for information; and further, that Council approve Policy Directive No. D-25 – "Public Alerting System Policy", as contained within the Staff Report dated April 12, 2023.



Jamie Leggatt, Director of Communications

3. FINANCE COMMENTS:


The annual cost of Chilliwack's Alertable agreement is incorporated into the City's 2023 approved Financial Plan.



Glen Savard, Director of Finance

**4. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S
RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:**

Supports recommendation.



Chris Crosman, CAO

POLICY DIRECTIVE NO. D-25

SUBJECT: PUBLIC ALERTING SYSTEM POLICY

APPROVAL DATE: _____ LAST REVIEW DATE: _____

REFERENCE: _____

A. PURPOSE

This Policy Directive is intended to establish procedures for designated Staff when accessing, maintaining, and operating the City's public alerting system and explain the roles and requirements for issuing alerts.

B. SCOPE

This Policy Directive applies to Staff responsible for authorizing and administering the City's public alerting system.

C. DEFINITIONS

Alert Administrator: Designated Staff approved to use the public alerting system to issue an alert when requested by an alert authorizer.

Alerting Authority: An agency or organization with the designated authority to alert and warn the public when there is an impending natural or human-made disaster or threat.

Alert Authorizer: Designated Staff approved to review alert criteria and request that an alert administrator send a public alert during an emergency as needed.

City: the City of Chilliwack.

Emergency: A present or imminent event or circumstance that is caused by accident, fire, explosion, technical failure, or the forces of nature, and requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety, or welfare of a person or to limit damage to property.

D. STAFF ROLES

1. Only Staff designated by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) through this policy are approved to either request a public alert or use the public alerting system to complete an authorized request.
 - a. The following positions may authorize alerts:
 - i. Chief Administrative Officer
 - ii. Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
 - iii. Emergency Program Coordinator
 - iv. Fire Chief

D. STAFF ROLES (continued)

- v. Director of Engineering
 - vi. EOC Director
- b. The following positions may administer authorized alerts:
 - i. Emergency Program Coordinator
 - ii. Director of Communications
 - iii. Communications Coordinator
- 2. The CAO may designate additional individuals to act as alert administrators during an emergency.
- 3. Designated Staff must access and use the public alerting system in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of BC* and applicable City privacy and technology-use policies.
- 4. The Communications Department is responsible for ensuring that the policy is updated as needed.

E. PROCEDURE

Permitted Use

- 1. The public alerting system will only be used to issue alerts for emergencies as detailed in the City of Chilliwack Emergency Response and Recovery Plan, where the City is the alerting authority and requires information to be rapidly communicated to the public.
- 2. The following criteria will be used to determine if an alert may be issued:
 - a. Urgent: the public should act immediately or soon;
 - b. Severe: the event poses an extraordinary or significant threat to life or property;
 - c. Certain: the event is likely or has been observed; or,
 - d. Local: the event is occurring in or will affect parts of the City of Chilliwack.

Authorizing Alerts

- 1. A Staff member approved through this policy to authorize alerts, will determine that an emergency where the City is the alerting authority, meets the criteria for a public alert.
- 2. The authorizing Staff member will request an alert from an alert administrator.

Issuing Alerts

1. A Staff member designated by this policy to administer alerts will access the public alerting system.
2. The Staff member administering the public alert will have the final alert content reviewed and approved by an Alert Authorizer and the CAO before issuing the alert.

Chief Administrative Officer