

What is SMC Alert ?

SMC Alert is a digital communication system used by governments, emergency management agencies and first responders to send emergency alerts, notifications and updates to your cell phone, pager, Blackberry, PDA and/or e-mail account. To receive emergency alerts, all you have to do is sign up for an SMC Alert account.

What is the cost of this service?

The City of Burlingame, Town of Hillsborough, and San Mateo County is offering the Community Alert System service free to residents and people working for businesses located in San Mateo. You may sign up for a SMC Alert account free of charge. Your cell phone carrier may charge you a few pennies per text message received. The City of Burlingame, Town of Hillsborough, and San Mateo County does not assume any responsibility for costs charged to you by your carrier.

What is a SMC Alert account?

Each resident of San Mateo County, or people working for businesses located in San Mateo County may sign up for a SMC Alert™ account. You can add multiple devices (cell phones, pagers, PDAs) to a SMC Alert™ account. An alert will be sent to each email account, cell phone and other mobile device listed in your SMC Alert account.



How does the Community Alert System work?

In an emergency situation, an alert will be sent by San Mateo County authorized personnel and you will receive email notifications, and several text messages on your cell phone or mobile device. Read these messages promptly and follow the instructions.

Additional instructions may follow throughout the emergency situation so keep your phone near you. Even if the cell phones are busy, text messages should still come through to your phone.

When you do receive an alert message, please follow the instructions on that message. Please do NOT call 911 or an emergency Communications Center as they are already aware of the emergency -- and your call will tie up precious resources, further endangering the emergency situation.

We will make every effort to update web sites in real time with more information about the emergency. In addition, you should tune to local TV and radio.

Will my cell phone work in a major emergency?

Alerts are delivered using the text messaging (SMS network) feature of your cell phone. The alerts come across like a page on a pager. ALL cell phone carriers, and paging companies, offer text messaging. Nearly all phones purchased within the past few years are text messaging capable. If you are unsure, contact your carrier to ask about your phone and text messaging.

What is text-messaging and how do I sign-up for it?

Text messages are short messages sent to your phone, similar to receiving a page. Each message contains between 100 and 160 characters, or about 15 words, depending upon your carrier. An example of a text message is the notification you receive on your phone when you have new voice mail.

Most carriers activate the service automatically. You should check with your carrier to make sure your text messaging is active. See the carrier matrix for a list of carriers and contact information.



What types of alerts will be sent?

Alert types may include life safety, fire, weather, accidents involving utilities or roadways, or disaster notification such as a terrorist attack. A few examples of the types of messages that can be sent are:

Emergency Situations:

- Notify citizens of the location of the nearest emergency shelter, available bed space, hours of operation during a crisis;
- Notify citizens of available evacuation routes during an emergency;
- Activate special teams within the community, based upon an event

Precautionary Warnings:

- Severe weather warnings;
- Activate a citizen watch group if mischievous activity is reported by the police;
- Pre-cautionary evacuation order if on high alert
- Planned Events, like parades and construction.



How do I register for SMC Alert?

Burlingame and Hillsborough are two of the first cities in the county to provide residents with the opportunity to subscribe to SMC Alert. Notices of important information and emergency alerts can be sent to subscribers through computer, cell phone or any device capable of receiving email. There is no charge for emails. At anytime, users can modify their selections or unsubscribe to the automatic notifications.

Alert Examples are

Hazmat (shelter in place or evacuation)

Utility outage (power, water, gas, phone)

Winter storm warning

Flash flood

Road closure

Earthquake

Follow-up alerts can be sent to update residents on a situation. Subscribers are placed in geographic groups based upon registration information; so if you reside in Burlingame and work in San Carlos, you could include that information when you register to receive alerts for each city.

To register for the SMC Alert, residents go to www.smcalert.info and follow instructions for "new users". Residents can select places where they live and work and any cities for which they want to receive alerts. Listing a specific geographic addresses is optional.

For questions and answers, go to <http://www.smcalert.info/faq.php>.

City of Burlingame Town of Hillsborough

Central County Fire Dept.
Burlingame Police Dept.
Hillsborough Police Dept.

SMC Alert

SAN MATEO COUNTY ALERT

