

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****October 12, 2021**

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**SUBJECT: FORT WORTH TEXAS ALERTS REGISTRATION AND OUTREACH**

In March 2020, the city launched the new emergency alert system – Fort Worth Texas Alerts. This system uses the Code Red system and replaces Nixle, our previous alert system. It is designed to keep residents and visitors to Fort Worth informed during any potential hazards.

**Switch from Nixle**

The decision to switch from Nixle was followed by an RFP process. A committee made of up of several city departments selected Code Red as the new vendor for several reasons:

- Alerts are sent out quickly with little delay. Nixle alerts were often delayed especially during severe storm season.
- Subscribers can control how they receive alerts – voice, text or email. Nixle was limited only to text.
- Existing “reverse 911” databases (landlines) and utility billing databases have been integrated, expanding the capability to include both unregistered and registered subscribers. This increases the amount of people getting notified which was limited using Nixle.
- Preferences can be updated at any time by the user.
- Allows for more targeted messaging to smaller geographic areas.
- Can integrate with Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) FEMA alert system.

Unfortunately, the subscribers in Nixle couldn't be migrated over to the new system due the increased capabilities of the Code Red system and the different technology platforms. The Code Red system has more information fields, which allows for more precise alerts and ways for people to get alerted. When we stopped using the system, we had 53,596 text and 16,176 email subscribers. Nixle subscribers were sent multiple messages prior to the new system coming on board, informing them that the system would be retired and encouraging them to sign up for the new Fort Worth Texas Alerts (Code Red). In addition, a media campaign including social media and NextDoor were also used to get the word out.

**Registering for alerts**

The Code Red system can send to both registered and unregistered (water utility database) residents. We continue to urge residents to register for the alerts to receive multiple ways to get warnings (text, voice, and email). We currently have 9,276 subscribers text and email registrations. We also have 98,440 from the utility contacts and 238,620 reverse 911 numbers. This gives us a total of 346,336 contacts in Code Red.

To register, visit [www.fortworthtexasalerts.gov](http://www.fortworthtexasalerts.gov). There is a link to the registration system on the landing page.

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**SUBJECT: FORT WORTH TEXAS ALERTS REGISTRATION AND OUTREACH****Some Frequently Asked Questions**

If I was registered for Nixle, will I have to re-register?

Yes you will need to re-register. Fort Worth Texas Alerts is a new system with added capabilities so the data could not be transferred over.

How much does it cost?

Fort Worth Texas Alerts is free; however, standard message and data rates may apply.

What if my contact information changes?

The system is only as good as the information you provide. If your cell phone, cell phone provider service, work phone, address or email address change, you will need to update your profile and contact information. For this reason, during the registration process, it is important that you create a profile so, that you can go back to change your information anytime.

Will my contact information be shared with others?

No, the information that you provide will be used for emergency purposes only. We will not give or sell your phone numbers or email addresses to any vendor or other organization.

**How we use the alert system:**

Alerts can be sent out citywide or to specific geographic areas.

They can be sent as text message, emails or phone calls.

The system is designed to alert residents to potential hazards:

- Severe weather
- Acts of terrorism
- Chemical spills
- Service impacts like boil notices or road closures

The system can also be used for public safety messaging. The alert system is overseen by the Fort Worth Fire Office of Emergency Management.

Some of the ways we have used the alert system include:

- Weekly testing of sirens
- West Nile virus positive results
- Stay at Home, Work Safe – COVID messages
- Hard Freeze Warning
- Electronic messages during storm
- Boil water notice

**Increasing registration and awareness**

We have done several campaigns to increase subscribers. We used the following channels to promote the service:

- Nixle notifications – March 2020
- City News - Sept 2020 and Feb 2021



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- Community Engagement and Faith-based bulletins – Sept 2020 and Feb 2021
- Nextdoor and Social Media – Sept 2020 and Feb 2021
- Instagram - Feb 2021
- Roundup – Feb 2021
- Trinity Metro Bus Ads – Feb 2021

This year we used September, which is National Preparedness Month, to do another registration push. Our outreach efforts included:

- Messages and handouts to our faith-based and community partners.
- Use all city communications tools (City News, bulletins, social media)
- September bill insert
- Special Edition newsletter from Fire and Office of Emergency Management
- Share information on emergency preparedness with schools, neighborhoods and organizations.
- Media releases and PSAs (radio and video).

**Ongoing outreach**

Information on registration is also shared each Wednesday when the sirens are tested. Included in the notification is a link "How to Register for Fort Worth Alerts". This is also shared on the Office of Emergency Management social media: Twitter (10.4K), Instagram (1K) and Nextdoor (267,000 residents) On the first of the month, during the longer testing, registration information is also shared on Fire social media: facebook (56K), Twitter (27.4K) and Instagram (8K).

Registration information is also sent out prior to potential severe weather and in the Office of Emergency Management newsletter.

We plan to map the current subscribers and do an additional push in neighborhoods with low response rates.

Questions about the Fort Worth Texas Alerts system and the registration outreach can be directed to Maribel Martinez, Emergency Management Coordinator, 817-392-6173, [Maribel.martinez@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:Maribel.martinez@fortworthtexas.gov) or Michelle Gutt, Communications & Public Engagement Director, 817-392-6248, [Michelle.gutt@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:Michelle.gutt@fortworthtexas.gov).

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