

# Emergency Communications: Technical Solutions, Political Risks, Community Information, and Lessons Learned



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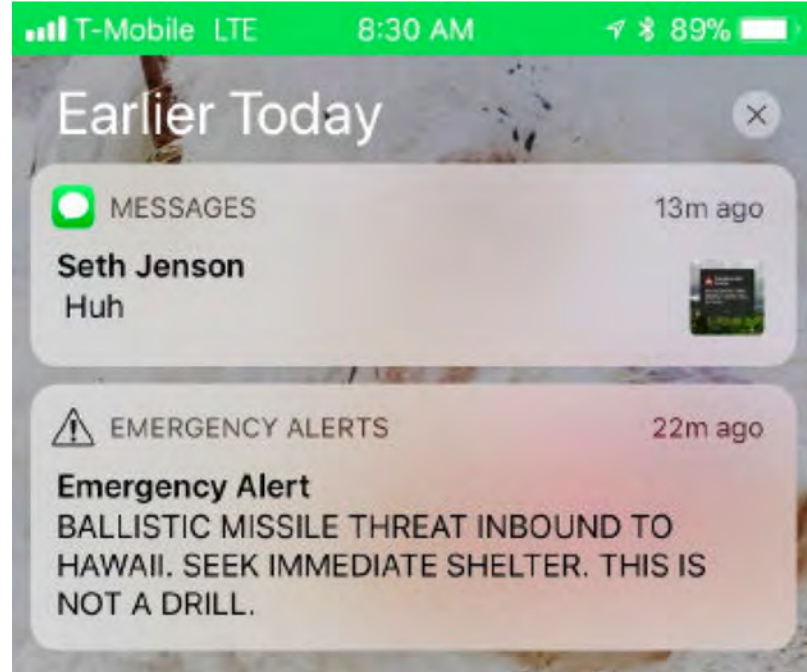


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# Emergency Alerts

Public Safety is Job #1

- **Failed Notification**
- **Failed Public Response**
- **Failed Preparation to Act**



# Challenges



## GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

### California's Camp Fire Highlights Major Failings in Phone-Based Alerts

*According to the logs, official warnings about the rapidly approaching Camp Fire reached fewer than 6,200 of the 27,000 Paradise residents who had signed up for the notifications.*

BY PAIGE ST. JOHN AND JOSEPH SERNA, LOS ANGELES TIMES / DECEMBER 3, 2018



(TNS) — Emergency phone calls telling Paradise residents to run from the massive Camp Fire failed to reach more than a third of even the minority who signed up for the warnings, according to a data review by *The Times* on Friday.



Many of the town's residents said they relied on calls from alarmed relatives and the sight of approaching flames to flee from California's worst fire on Nov. 8.



Logs released Friday show the official warning system reached fewer than 6,200 of the 27,000 who live in the ridge-top community.

- Inaccurate Geo-Targeting
- Low Registration Rates
- Failure to Practice Use
- Public Reaction
  - Distrust
  - Confusion on Action to Take



TRIPEPI SMITH

# Actions

CITY OF MALIBU



**FULL-SCALE TEST**  
EVERBRIDGE DISASTER  
MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Wednesday | February 7 | 7 PM  
sign up at [MalibuCity.org/DisasterNotifications](https://MalibuCity.org/DisasterNotifications)

For more information, contact Public Safety Manager Susan Dueñas at 310-456-2489 ext. 313 or email [SDuenas@MalibuCity.org](mailto:SDuenas@MalibuCity.org)

CITY OF MALIBU



**DISASTER MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM** 

Multiple devices • Live updates  
For true emergencies & evacuations ONLY

sign up at [MalibuCity.org/DisasterNotifications](https://MalibuCity.org/DisasterNotifications)

- Review Existing Tools & Options
- Measure Penetration Rates
- Practice with the Public
- Practice Internal Review and Use



# Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Plans

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# Authority to Shutoff Power

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- CA Public Utilities Code (PU Code) Sections 451 and 399.2(a)
  - Authority to shut off electric power in emergency situations when necessary to protect public safety
- CPUC Resolution ESRB-8
  - Reasonableness
    - Burden to demonstrate is decision was necessary to protect public safety
  - Notification
    - Must provide notice to its customers, to the extent possible and appropriate
  - Mitigation
    - Must provide Mitigation to its customers, to the extent possible and appropriate
  - Reporting requirements
    - Submit a report to the CPUC Safety and Enforcement Division within 10 days

# FIRE AND SEVERE WEATHER MONITORING

## Example from Southern California Edison



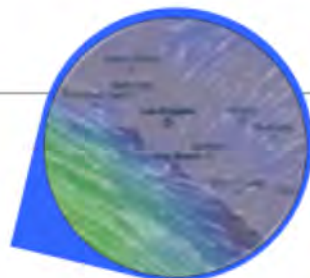
### Weather Stations

- Collects hi-resolution local weather data
- Enables more accurate forecasting



### Situational Awareness Center

- 24/7 weather and situational awareness monitoring
- Co-located with SCE's Emergency Operations Center and Watch Office
- SCE meteorologists on-site



### High-Resolution Weather Data Visualization

- Visualization of weather conditions at circuit level
- Alerts when conditions reach thresholds



### Fire Monitoring Cameras

- High-Definition
- Remote-controlled pan-tilt zoom

# PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF

## Example from Southern California Edison

Last resort public safety measure to mitigate wildfire risk

4-7 DAYS  
AHEAD



When forecasts indicate extreme weather, SCE will begin predictive modeling to assess potential impact.

3 DAYS  
AHEAD



SCE monitors fire weather watch alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS) and continues to refine predictive models.

2 DAYS  
AHEAD



Extreme fire weather conditions forecasted and NWS Red Flag Warning issued. Coordinate with local government and agencies (e.g. emergency responders) first. Initiate customer notifications on possible power shutoff.

1 DAY  
AHEAD



Extreme fire weather conditions imminent; continued modeling and more accurate forecasts determine affected areas. Continue to coordinate and communicate with local government, agencies and customers of possible power shutoff.

POWER  
SHUTOFF



Extreme fire weather and dangerous conditions validated by field resources; notify local government, agencies and customers of power shutoff.

POWER  
RESTORATION



Extreme fire weather subsides to safe levels and conditions validated by field resources; inspections and patrols of equipment begin, then power is restored to affected communities; agencies and customers notified of power restoration.

PLANNING AND  
MONITORING

OUTAGE  
RESTORATION



# Concerns with PSPS Plans

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- Conditions and transparency in decision making processes
- Effective event notification to stakeholders
- Impact of de-energization on
  - Vulnerable populations
  - Alert and Warning capabilities
  - Water services
- Decision process and timeline for re-energization
- Lack of IOU representation within the emergency response structure
- Mitigation to reduce the need for PSPS plans

# What We've Seen



# Communication Objectives

- Coordinate with Incident Command and all agency partners to deliver accurate and timely information.
- Utilize all channels to communicate: alerts (text, email, landline, WEA), website, media, social media, 211, County government cable TV, kiosks and trap lines, daily press conferences and community meetings, evacuation shelter.
- Monitor social media to correct and contain misinformation and rumors.
- Communication focus to reach Spanish-speakers, and those with access and functional needs.



# Communication Challenges

1

## **Bilingual Communications:**

40% of county is non-English speaker.

2

## **No Power, Communications, Utilities:**

130,000 customers lost power in Thomas Fire. In Debris Flow, thousands without power, gas, cell, cable TV, water, sanitation.

3

## **Back-to-Back Unprecedented Disasters**

Challenging for communication staffing resources and training.

4

## **Evacuations During Holiday Season:**

Evacuations ran Dec. 6-21. Schools were closed up to 18 days in December and January. SB City College and UCSB delayed finals.

**Evacuation fatigue prior to debris flow.**



# Lessons Learned from the Trenches



# Questions?



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