

Alert Pinellas FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions about Alert Pinellas Emergency Notification System

1. What is Alert Pinellas and why is it important to me?
 - a. Alert Pinellas is an emergency notification service by which public safety managers can notify residents and businesses in a variety of ways including: cellular phone, home and work phones, text messaging or email about emergency situations. The system is capable of sending messages only to specific neighborhoods or the entire community.
2. Am I already included in the Alert Pinellas database?
 - a. Only published, listed telephone numbers are automatically uploaded into the Alert Pinellas database. We encourage citizens to subscribe to ensure they are receiving messages that correspond with their current contact information and neighborhood location.
3. How do the notifications work?
 - a. When an emergency situation warrants notification to a neighborhood or the entire County, emergency managers log in to the Alert Pinellas notification system and send notifications in a variety of ways including: cell, home and work phones, text messaging and/or email.
4. For what kinds of situations will Alert Pinellas be used?
 - a. Alert Pinellas is used during severe weather situations, evacuation notices, fires or floods, major roadway issues, boil water notices, chemical spills or gas leaks. In short, Alert Pinellas can be used for any emergency alert. Alert Pinellas will be used when emergency situations arise that you should know about.
5. Why do I need Alert Pinellas when I have TV to keep me informed?
 - a. Alert Pinellas provides an additional level of safety. If the power goes out, you may not be able to depend upon TV. However, because telephone lines are self-powered and most people now have cell phones, we can continue to keep you informed through messages delivered by Alert Pinellas. In addition, the news may not report on a localized emergency situation.
6. How do I know if my phone number is included in the Alert Pinellas service?
 - a. All listed and unlisted residential and business phone numbers are included in the Alert Pinellas service. If you have moved or changed your telephone number recently, you should update your information by registering with Alert Pinellas using the web registration page at: www.pinellascounty.org/AlertPinellas
 - b. If you do not have access to the internet at home, please consider using a computer at your local library, or ask a friend or family member for assistance. Online registration is the most efficient, accurate and private way to supply your information.
 - c. For those without internet access, you can call (866) 484-3264 to sign up. You will be prompted to leave your name, address and number you wish to add.

7. What, if any, contact information do you already have in the emergency notification system for me?
 - a. The Alert Pinellas notification system utilizes information obtained from 9-1-1 databases or commercial sources, both of which typically include published home (landline) phone numbers.

8. What if my home phone number is unlisted?
 - a. If your home (landline) number is unlisted, there is a possibility it does not exist within our emergency notification system. To be cautious, please enter it when filling out the Citizen Notification Enrollment web form. Should the number already exist in the system's database, you will not be contacted twice on your home phone number.

9. Will I still get emergency notifications if I don't sign up?
 - a. If you don't sign up, you still could receive emergency notification on your traditional landline home phone, but nowhere else.
 - b. Also, if Pinellas County Emergency Management sends a Countywide Emergency 'Wireless Emergency Alert' (WEA) all cellular phones within Pinellas County capable of receiving these types alerts would be notified.

10. Will the online registration form allow me to enter a primary and secondary telephone number?
What if I want to register additional numbers for my address?
 - a. After you submit the initial registration information, you may select the '+ Add Phone' button to add additional telephone numbers.
 - b. You may also use the '+ Add Email' button to add more than one (1) email address.

11. What if I only have a cell phone?
 - a. You can add your cell phone number by using the Alert Pinellas online registration form.
 - b. After you submit the initial registration information, you may also select the '+ Add Phone' button to add additional telephone numbers.

12. How will I recognize an Alert Pinellas message?
 - a. Alert Pinellas messages will have a caller ID 866-419-5000. We suggest you program this number in your cell phone as a "new contact" and use "Alert Pinellas" as the contact name. If you need to replay the emergency notification message, simply dial this number and you will be able to hear the message again.

13. What should I do if I receive an Alert Pinellas message?
 - a. Listen carefully to the entire message. It will be brief and will not be repeated. Follow the instructions given. You may be directed to a website or a telephone number for further information. Do not hang up until you have heard the entire message or you might miss vital information. Do not call 9-1-1 for further information.

14. I have a cordless phone, and it does not work when the power goes out. How am I going to get the Alert Pinellas message?
 - a. There are two ways you can continue to receive telephone messages from the County through Alert Pinellas:
 1. Make sure you have at least one working corded telephone – and be sure to turn the ringer on.
 2. Use the Alert Pinellas online registration form to enter a Primary Phone number and an alternative phone number. You can fill in the Alternative Phone number with another contact numbers such as your cell phone number or work number. Entering in an alternative phone number will cause BOTH your primary and alternative phone numbers to be called.
15. Will Alert Pinellas leave a message on a machine?
 - a. Yes, Alert Pinellas will leave a message on a machine or on voice mail. Part of the Alert Pinellas solution is the ability to recognize answering devices and leave the message completely in one pass.
16. What happens if the line is busy?
 - a. If the line is busy, Alert Pinellas will try two more times to connect.
17. What circumstances might prohibit Alert Pinellas from delivering a message to me?
 - a. If you have only cordless phones in your residence, the power is out and you have not registered an alternate phone number, Alert Pinellas will not be able to contact you.
 - b. If your line is busy for an extended period and your calls do not forward to voice mail or an answering machine in a busy condition, after three tries, Alert Pinellas will stop calling your number. It's best to have an alternate phone number in the calling database for these situations.
 - c. If you have a privacy manager on your main phone service, Alert Pinellas will not be able to contact you unless you have registered an alternate number that will accept the call.
18. Will my contact information be shared with others?
 - a. No, the information that you provide will be used for emergency purposes only. It will not be given to any other vendor or organization or used for any other purpose.
19. If a notification is sent out is it guaranteed I will receive it if I register?
 - a. When the emergency notification is activated, the system will make several attempts to reach the registered numbers. Due to the emergency, phone systems, both landline and cell may be inundated with calls and your provider may not be able to deliver the message. We do not assume legal responsibility for technical difficulties that may result in notification failures.
20. Who is responsible for the accuracy of the information in the system?
 - a. We cannot monitor the current or future accuracy of the information provided by participants in this program. It is the sole responsibility of participants to keep any information provided current and accurate. We do not assume legal responsibility for inaccurate information that may result in notification failures.

21. I don't live in Pinellas County Limits.
 - a. Use your child's school
 - b. A workplace
 - c. or a family members location inside Pinellas County's limits

22. Can I change my contact preferences?
 - a. Yes. You can log back into the system using your portal ID and password to change, add or delete your contact information.

23. Will this cost me anything?
 - a. Pinellas County offers this service for free. If you choose to receive a notice by text message, your service provider's normal text messaging fees will apply.

24. Do I need to install software on my phone?

No. The system uses industry standard SMS text messaging protocol to send messages to your phone. Your mobile phone plan will need to accept text messages to work properly.

25. If I registered with the previous Emergency Notification System do I need to do it again?
 - a. If you registered prior to September 1, 2013 we ask that you log on and create a new registration.

26. How do I log into the system?
 - a. Register with Alert Pinellas using the web registration page at: www.pinellascounty.org/AlertPinellas

27. Do I need to add a 1 or area code at the beginning of my phone number?
 - a. You do not need to add the 1 but you do need to add your area code.

28. If I enter the wrong information, can you correct it for me?
 - a. Everyone is responsible to correct or update their own information. If you log back in, it will allow you to make any changes.
 - b. If can't recall your login information simply create a new registration and your information will be added. The system is smart enough to not call the same number twice.

29. If I send you my information can you register for me?
 - a. Unfortunately we do not have enough resources to register everyone individually. Please go to the link provided to register. www.pinellascounty.org/AlertPinellas

30. Is registration secure?
 - a. Yes, the sign up page is hosted on a secure server.

31. How will this information be used?

- a. This information will not be used for any other purpose than to send out emergency notifications.
32. Are all of the fields required?
- a. We ask everyone to fill out all the fields and we are encouraging everyone to complete as much contact information as possible so that we may reach you in an emergency.
33. Do I have to change my password once I've logged in?
- a. No.
34. How many characters must my password contain?
- a. Your password can contain 6-30 characters
35. What if I forget my password?
- a. The Self-Registration Portal includes a "Forgot my password" option to assist those who cannot recall their login.
36. Who do I call for more information
- a. Pinellas County Emergency Management (727) 464-5550