

USU Emergency Alert system deemed a success

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A recent test of the Utah State University Emergency Alert System was a huge success, said Judy Crockett, USU's emergency manager. "Within an hour of the initial test we were able to notify 91 percent of the students who had signed up," Crockett said. "We were able to contact 16,942 students and campus employees by telephone and 27,294 by e-mail."

The USU Emergency Alert System allows students to be notified of emergency situations on campus including bomb threats, fires, school closures due to snow, evacuations and building closures, Crockett said. Students who have signed up for the Emergency Alert System were notified via phone call, e-mail, text message and voice mail.

"This is a good thing we've got here," Crockett said. "We're real pleased with it. We incurred no major problems during the test."

Other schools use this system to send out texts about upcoming events on campus such as basketball games, said Captain Steve Milne, USU Police Department. The problem with that is students start getting texts all the time and might start ignoring them after a while, he said.

"We're using our Emergency Alert System strictly for campus emergencies," Milne said. "Students won't receive notifications about non-emergencies."

Milne also said students don't have to worry about their information being sold to solicitors; it is strictly for the use of the Emergency Alert System. Crockett said, "Students can still sign up at any time. This is an awesome thing. We encourage everyone to get on there and sign up."

Students are also encouraged to notify their parents after signing up, Crockett said. The reason for this, Crockett said, is so parents won't get worried and call during the tests, thinking there's been an emergency.

"The system will be tested every semester. If you've put your parent's number down as one of your contacts, be sure to let them know that you've signed up," Crockett said.

All phone calls and text messages will come from the number (435) 797-7622, Crockett said. Students can program the number in their phones. Students and campus employees can sign up for emergency alerts through the Self Service banner system on the schools Web site. More information on the Emergency Alert System, including frequently asked questions, can be accessed at www.usu.edu/alert. Anyone associated with the university is encouraged to visit these Web sites and learn more about the program and how to stay informed.

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