

MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION.

# Protocols for the Emergency Notification System (CodeRED™)

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**Version 3.0:** 13-Feb-12  
**Presented by:** Christensen

## Executive Summary

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Recent events in an island town revealed shortcomings in the Island Towns' ability to notify the citizenry of health hazards and other emergencies in a dependable, auditable manner. The Town Emergency Management Directors in association with the Sheriff have contracted with CodeRED to provide such an Emergency Notification System.

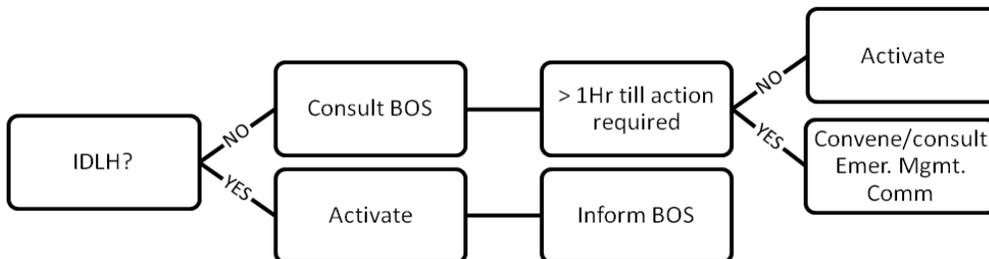
Emergent situations dictate their own timelines. Some arise in the normal course of town business, with a measured pace and time for committee meetings. Some arise or are made worse by natural events, with no warning, requiring immediate response.

Each town's Comprehensive Emergency Management plan specifies responsibilities for communication of warnings, ordering evacuations, and other contingencies. Recognizing that events may not match the plan, the protocols herein are meant to flesh out how CodeRed will be used by the Island Towns.

To avoid diluting the effect, messages will be restricted to warnings that could be or must be acted upon by the citizenry, like evacuation, sheltering in place, road closures, and missing persons for whom a search is likely to or has begun. Informational messages aimed to reduce calls to 911 also rate high priority as well.

Authorized users will exercise prudence in use of the system. Authorized Users shall not send CodeRed messages without the approval of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen where the message will be received unless IMMEDIATE HAZARD TO LIFE OR HEALTH (IDLH) exists and it is not possible to obtain his/her approval in advance. Authorized Users shall inform the selectmen as soon as possible of any message being sent.

***Authorized Users will use due diligence in consulting with elected officials in accordance with these guidelines, but it is expected that the delegation of authority to public safety officials includes the immediate use of the CodeRED system when necessary to protect the public safety.***



## Level of Messaging

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1. Informational or convenience notification
  - 1.1. Island-wide
  - 1.2. Multiple town
  - 1.3. Own town
2. Health Threat: essential, but not emergent
  - 2.1. Island-wide
  - 2.2. Multiple town
  - 2.3. Own town
3. Public Safety Information: preventative
  - 3.1. Island-wide
  - 3.2. Multiple town
  - 3.3. Own town
4. Immediately dangerous to life or health
  - 4.1. Island wide
  - 4.2. Multiple town
  - 4.3. Own town

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Immediacy</i></li><li>• <i>Geographic extent</i></li><li>• <i>Level of action required of citizens</i></li></ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health</i></li><li>• <i>Imminent Danger</i></li><li>• <i>Potential Danger</i></li></ul>
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## Permitted Users

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**LEVEL 1 EMERGENCY:** The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen must authorize any activation of the system. A non-emergency use of the system will incur expenditure from the bank of “free” minutes

**LEVEL 2 EMERGENCY:** A phone caucus or meeting of the Emergency Management Committee will review the use and seek authorized activation of the System from the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

**LEVEL 3 EMERGENCY:** Where possible, Authorized Users will inform the Board of Selectmen, consult with another member of the Emergency Management Team, and shall seek authorized activation of the System from the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen before activation.

**LEVEL 4 EMERGENCY:** The Fire Chief, Police Chief, Health Agent, Town Administrator and Emergency Management Director may activate a town-wide alert, either directly or through the Communications Center, and shall seek authorized activation of the System from the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. If no Selectmen are available, the Authorized User shall notify the Selectmen as soon as possible.

*“...Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”*  
*Gen. Dwight Eisenhower*

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## Agency Capability

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By Massachusetts law, the Sheriff has authority over Island-wide communications and dispatch. CodeRED messages could be initiated for any of the following areas or jurisdictions. In most cases, only the jurisdiction affected would initiate such a message.

### Authorization by jurisdiction

Messaging area	Agency	
	Sheriff	Individual Town
Island Wide	X	
Multi-town <i>Eg. Evacuation notice</i>	X	
Individual Town	X	X
Previously designated geographic area <i>Eg: area prone to flooding</i>	X	X
Area defined at the time <i>Eg: area threatened by forest fire</i>	X	X
Area defined by radius from a point	X	X

## Authorization

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*Authorized users must be trained in the use of the system and the security protocols that must be observed. **Authorized Users***

### Contributing Users

#### Authorized Users

Chief of Police  
 Chief of Fire Department  
 Town Administrator  
 Health Agent  
 Emergency Management Director

#### Contributing Users

Parks and Recreation  
 Highway Department  
 School Principals, Superintendent  
 Board of Health  
 Library Director  
 Council of Aging

*Messages should contain, at least, the type of emergency, the response required of citizens, the agency issuing the advisory and where to get more information.*

- I. Directly from Incident Commander on scene to Communications Center
- II. Directly by Incident Commander
  - o By phone of predefined area
  - o With computer and phone at Incident Command
  - o Relay from IC to another authorized user
- III. Directly by authorized user
- IV. By authorized user at request of Consulting or Contributing User

### “Always Call” list

Town official, public safety officers and the press who wish to monitor all uses of the CodeRED system in the County of Dukes County will be assigned to this list. This list shall be maintained by the town EM Directors who shall verify and update it annually in May.

## Testing

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The system will be tested annually during the national Hurricane Preparedness Week in May and as necessary.

## Cost

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The Sheriff of the County of Dukes County acting as agency for the individual Towns has contracted with CodeRED for emergency notification services, sometimes referred to as reverse 911.

- The contract term is for three years with an anniversary of 1 July.
- The cost is apportioned according to the winter population estimated by the Martha's Vineyard Commission
- Payment is made directly to CodeRED

## Privacy and list management

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Due to privacy concerns, the Towns and the County do not hold copies of the list. The list is produced from the 911 information from the phone company, individual registration, and other geo-coded information.

- Each use of the system produces a report of the results, including total length of time to call.
- This report also shows whether the call was answered by a person, an answering machine, or "operator intercepted" (did not go through).

# Scenario Examples

## **I. Hostage situation, Amber alert, active shooter**

### **Lead Agency: Law Enforcement**

In response to an intruder who has taken a hostage, the West Tisbury School is in lockdown, and the police have set up a perimeter. Incident Command is established.

**LEVEL 4.2:**

### ***Activation method***

Incident Commander or designee directly or through Communications Center with consultation at the discretion on the Incident Commander...

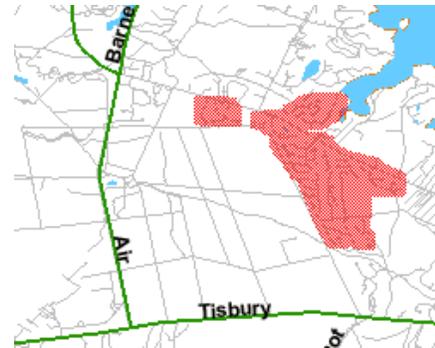
## **II. Fire in State Forest with High Winds**

### **Lead Agency: Fire Dept.**

A fire which started behind the Youth Hostel is fanned by winds toward the Airport and to Dodger's Hole in Edgartown. Incident Command or Unified Command is established.

**LEVEL 4.2:**

- Requires or may require evacuation in neighboring towns
- Messages may be different for different geographic areas
- Requires coordinated action between Fire and Police in multiple jurisdictions
- Cross-jurisdictional activation by County



**Figure 1 Sample CodeRed Map**

### ***Activation method***

Incident Commander or designee directly to Communications Center.

An Incident Commander may order an immediate evacuation of a building or area of the Town. The evacuation will be mandatory if ordered by the Fire Chief in accordance with 527 CMR 1.03 (8) and 527 CMR 1.06 (4)--WT CEMP

## **III. Beach Closings**

### **Lead Agency: Boards of Health**

**LEVEL 3.2**

- Dissemination on case-by-case basis
- Hazards include stinging jelly fish, high bacteria levels, heavy surf.
- Town participation will be on an "opt-in" basis

## **IV. Tornado or immediately impending weather event**

### **Lead Agency: Emergency Management or Sherriff**

Through MEMA or NOAA the Emergency Management Directors receive notice of tornadoes or dangerous thunderstorms that threaten the Island.

#### **LEVEL 4.1:**

- Has Island-wide significance
- Requires sheltering in place
- Marine interests affected

### ***Activation method***

Comm. Center makes notification, or any of the authorized users.

## **V. Flu Pandemic**

### **Lead Agency: Island Boards of Health**

One or more of the Island Health Agents receives notification from the Massachusetts Board of Public Health that a flu-vaccine dispensing station will be needed to deliver medication in two weeks to the entire Island winter population.

#### **LEVEL 2.1**

- Has Island-wide significance
- Island Health Coalition (includes members from all public safety and governmental disciplines) will convene to establish which scenario applies.
- May require several different levels of message
  - Pre-clinic, rumor squelching, informational
  - Notification of times scheduled for particular targeted groups, e.g. the elderly, immune-compromised, children
  - Notification of sources for more information, self-help measures

## **VI. Biological or Chemical danger or threat**

### **Lead Agency: Island Boards of Health**

One or more of the Island Health Agents receives notification from the Massachusetts Board of Public Health that anthrax vaccine must be distributed to the entire winter population within the mandated 48 hours.

#### **LEVEL 4.1**

- Has Island-wide significance
- Island Health Coalition (includes members from all public safety and governmental disciplines) sets up Unified Command for Emergency Dispensing Station.
- May require several messages
  - Informational/calming
  - Notification of clinic location(s) and times

## **VII. Missing person, Alzheimer patient**

### **Lead Agency: Police Dept.**

Patient caretaker reports missing adult Alzheimer patient, last seen 20 minutes earlier.

#### **LEVEL 3.3**

- Search and message focus on a neighborhood or geographic area within the Town borders
- Message includes description and request to stay with subject and number to call.
- Leverages the capability of a small-town Police Dept.

## **VIII. Power Outage**

### **Lead Agency: Sheriff**

Microbursts have disrupted power delivery to several thousand Island customers. The Communications Center is inundated with calls

#### **LEVEL 1.1**

- Has Island-wide significance
- Actively informing populace of time frame for power restoration keeps 911 available for active emergencies
- Information can be tailored for specific areas.
- Message can include NSTAR number to call instead of calling 911.

## **IX. Hurricane Storm surge**

### **Lead Agency: Town Emergency Management Committee**

72 hours' notice is received from the National Weather Service of impending storm surge along the southern coast of the Island.

#### **LEVEL 2.3**

- Has Island-wide significance, but each town may have its own response in place
- BOS activates EOC, convenes Emergency Management Committee
- Dept. heads agree on essentials to communicate, and when.
- EMD launches the messages.

## **X. Winter Storm**

### **Lead Agency: Town Emergency Management Committee**

#### **LEVEL 2.3**

- Has Island-wide significance, but each town may have its own response in place
- BOS activates EOC, convenes Emergency Management Committee
- Dept. heads agree on essentials to communicate, and when.
- EMD launches the messages.

## *Log of CodeRED use to date*

Date and Time	Town	Type of call	calls to be made	connected	connect	minutes used	remarks
12/3/12 1110	WT	info	413	322	78.0%	247	WT PD B&E investigation
9/6/2011 1129	Edgartown	PH	80	68	85.0%	96	Nitrogen in water
8/28/2011 0940	WT	Emerg.	597	519	86.9%	591	Hurricane Irene has arrived
8/28/2011 0812	Edgartown	Emerg.	6196	4072	65.7%	8091	Irene here call
8/27/2011 2106	Chilmark	Emerg.	45	38	88.4%	38	Squibnocket storm surge
8/27/2011 2022	Chilmark	Emerg.	1581	172	10.9%		Auto recall of Irene night before and shelter open
8/27/2011 2002	Chilmark	Emerg.	2625	1044	39.8%	1273	Irene night before and shelter open
8/27/2011 1748	WT	Emerg.	112	78	69.6%	62	Irene low-lying targeted
8/27/2011 1534	VH	Emerg.	4061	2910	71.7%	3753	Irene shelter notification
8/27/2011 1723	OB	Emerg.	4828	3449	71.4%	4832	Saturday morning Irene Notification
8/26/2011 1025	Edgartown	Emerg.	6148	4215	68.6%	5886	Ferry Stopping and Shelter Info

APPENDIX 2: HISTORIC USE

8/25/2011 1750	Chilmark	Emerg.	1632	199	12.2%	120	Thursday Irene headsup
8/25/2011 1741	Edgartown	Emerg.	5863	3618	61.7%	2857	Pre-Irene call- check web/test info
8/25/2011 1731	Chilmark	Emerg.	2528	896	35.4%	558	Thursday Irene headsup
8/25/2011 1718	WT	Emerg.	545	478	87.7%	561	Irene WT prelim 1
8/25/2011 1719	OB	Emerg.	4556	3309	72.6%	3987	Irene 1st notification
8/25/2011 1120	Edgartown	Emerg.	374	279	74.6%	292	Grinder pump, pre Irene
8/18/2011 1754	Sheriff	Emerg.	3443	184	5.3%	208	recall fireworks
8/18/2011 1718	Sheriff	Emerg.	3934	491	12.5%	682	recall fireworks
8/18/2011 1525	Sheriff	Emerg.	4995	1061	21.2%	1537	recall fireworks
8/18/2011 1049	Sheriff	Emerg.	18496	13950	73.6%	22723	Fireworks
6/30/2011 1848	VH	Test	1481	129	8.7%	122	auto recall of test
6/30/2011 1849	VH	Test	1691	210	12.4%	196	auto recall of test
6/30/2011 1850	VH	Test	5965	4274	71.7%	4096	System test Vineyard Haven
9/3/2010 1418	Edgartown	Emerg.	3228	260	8.0%	202	Recall of road update 8 PM not 2 PM
9/3/2010 1410	Edgartown	Emerg.	3253	295	8.4%	237	auto recall of road update

APPENDIX 2: HISTORIC USE

9/3/2010 1355	Edgartown	Emerg.	3903	380	9.7%	301	auto recall of road update
9/3/2010 1328	Edgartown	Emerg.	6433	2530	39.3%	1994	road update
9/2/2010 2035	OB	Emerg.	2593	214	8.2%	277	autorecall Hurricane Earl night before
9/2/2010 2033	OB	Emerg.	383	31	8.0%	42	autorecall Hurricane Earl night before
9/2/2010 2023	OB	Emerg.	1559	135	8.7%	182	autorecall of job 149044
9/2/2010 2024	OB	Emerg.	2940	347	11.8%	462	autorecall of job 149045
9/2/2010 2025	OB	Emerg.	451	68	15.1%	90	recall
9/2/2010 2016	Chilmark	Emerg.	1547	172	11.1%	151	recall hurricane earl notification 1
9/2/2010 2010	OB	Emerg.	1900	341	18.0%	511	recall
9/2/2010 2001	Chilmark	Emerg.	1691	144	8.5%	121	recall hurricane earl notification 1
9/2/2010 1854	Chilmark	Emerg.	1858	167	9.0%	148	autorecall earl notification 1
9/2/2010 1845	WT	Emerg.	1455	1004	69.0%	1256	hurricane earl night before call
9/2/2010 1825	OB	Emerg.	2488	588	23.6%	853	autorecall emergency alert
9/2/2010 1823	Edgartown	Emerg.	3392	452	13.3%	583	autorecall hurricane earl call
9/2/2010 1757	Aquinnah	Emerg.	314	226	72.0%	259	hurricane earl
9/2/2010 1754	OB	Emerg.	5054	2566	50.8%	3798	Emergency alert 6 PM
9/2/2010 1742	Chilmark	Emerg.	2681	823	30.7%	731	hurricane earl notification 1
9/2/2010 1736	Sheriff	Emerg.	8147	712	8.7%	651	autorecall hurricane earl early warning
9/2/2010 1721	Sheriff	Emerg.	9865	1718	17.4%	1599	autorecall hurricane earl early warning
9/2/2010 1707	Edgartown	Emerg.	6365	2973	46.7%	3889	Edgartown call 6 PM & 8 PM
9/2/2010 1623	Sheriff	Emerg.	21282	11417	53.7%	10719	auto recall hurricane earl warning
9/2/2010 1537	Aquinnah	Emerg.					not sent
9/2/2010 1534	Sheriff	Emerg.	21467	185	90.0%	175	hurricane earl warning
9/2/2010 1235	Edgartown	Emerg.	144	92	63.9%	86	Edgartown grinder pump
8/31/2010 1645	Sheriff	Emerg.	21286	8747	41.1%	8685	hurricane preparedness county wide
6/2/2010 1646	Sheriff	Emerg.	12	11	91.7%	5	test call at training

## Typical CodeRED emergency alert system uses:

### **Environmental**

- Fires
- Floods
- Tidal Surges
- Dangerous Water Conditions
- Water Safety Alerts
- Dam/Levy Breaks
- Mudslides
- Avalanches
- Snow Emergencies
- Evacuation Routes
- Evacuation Notices

### **Search and Rescue**

- Missing Children
- Missing Elderly
- Missing Disabled

### **Schools and universities**

- School Lockdowns
- Evacuations
- School Closings
- Campus Crime Bulletins
- Bomb Threats
- Health Alerts
- Campus Event Notifications
- Faculty/Staff Notices
- Weather Advisory/Snow Emergencies
- Shelter-in-Place Notifications

### **Corporate**

- Rapid Internal Communication
- Rapid Client Communication

### **Man-Made Disasters**

- Terrorism Threats
- Bomb Threats
- Nuclear Hazards
- Bio-Terrorism Threats
- Chemical Spills
- Gas Leaks
- HAZMAT Emergencies
- Hostage Situations
- "Purpose of Alarm" (Instructions after alarms have been issued)

### **Crime**

- Prisoner Escape Warning
- Neighborhood Crime-Watch-Support
- Sexual Predator Alert

### **Public Works**

- Drinking Water Contamination
- Viral Outbreaks
- Utility Outages
- Street Closings
- Planned Outages
- Restoration of Service Alert
- Water Boil Alerts
- Water Usage Restrictions