TOWN OF MANSFIELD
POLICY MEMORANDUM

To: All Town Employees & Citizens
From: Matthew W. Hart, Town Manager
Date: September 18, 2014
Subject: Use of the Town's Emergency Notification System

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification and guidance regarding the use of the Town's emergency notification system (ENS). It is the goal of the Town of Mansfield to utilize the notification system as a means to disseminate information about significant incidents and events where the timely notification of an effected population or geographic area of the Town is essential or highly desirable, such as a natural, man-made or technological disaster. The emergency notification system may also be used to disseminate other urgent and important community information

II. Emergency Notifications, Urgent Notifications, & Community Information

Some examples of the various types of incidents or events where the ENS may be highly effective in notifying our citizens include the following:

Public Safety

- Major Fires
- Terrorism threats
- Bomb threats
- Bio-Terrorism /Nuclear hazard threats
- Chemical spills
- Gas leaks
- HAZMAT emergencies
- Hostage situations
- Prisoner escape warning
- Missing person(s)
- Evacuation notices
- Drinking water contamination
- Viral outbreaks

Administration

- Town government information of an urgent nature to citizens
- Key budget, referendum, and election dates
- Special events
- Programs

Environmental (Natural Disasters)

- Inclement weather closings and delays
- Fires
- Floods & water safety alerts
- Shelter facilities and comfort stations

Public Works

- Road paving
- Utility outages
- Street closings
- Public notifications
- Street sweeping
- Parking bans

A. Notification and Authorization Process

Each Department that uses the system shall designate a liaison(s) who will be trained on how to use the system. Duplication is encouraged in the event that the primary liaison is unavailable.

Each Department that will potentially use the system shall be provided with a password and subaccount of the master Town account.

i. External Notification Uses

All messages using the Emergency Town-Wide List (storms, chemical spill, etc.) require the approval of either the Town Manager or the Emergency Management Director or their respective designee(s) when serving in an acting capacity.

In certain emergency situations, authorized Fire-Rescue Emergency Incident Commanders (IC) are authorized to initiate usage of the ENS system when necessary in management of incidents occurring in the Town of Mansfield. The Emergency Management Director or his/her designee when serving in an acting capacity shall be notified as soon as practicable once the IC has directed utilization of the system.

All non-emergency phone and/or sms text messages to members of the public require the approval of the Town Manager or his/her designee when serving in an acting capacity.

Non-emergency email messages to those who subscribe to Department-specific lists can be sent by Departments that have completed training and have been granted access to lists relevant to their Department. The Town Manager, Emergency Management Director, and Department Heads or their respective designee(s) when serving in an acting capacity, are authorized to approve instances in which the system is used for said lists. Department Heads can identify specific staff with permission to send authorized messages. Departments should take care not to make excessive use of email notifications.

ii. Internal Notification Uses

All non-emergency phone, sms text, and/or email messages to members of a Department's own staff can be sent by Departments that have completed training and have been granted access to lists relevant to their Department. The Town Manager, Department Heads or their respective designee(s) when serving in an acting capacity are authorized to approve instances in which the system is used for internal departmental lists. Department Heads can identify specific staff with permission to send authorized messages. Departments should take care not to make excessive use of notifications.

B. Prohibited Use

Content of the information provided will not include vulgar, obscene, or other inappropriate language, photographs, or graphics. ENS shall not be used for private or personal activity, political messages, or improper or erroneous messages.

III. Citizen Complaints

Citizen complaints regarding the use of the system shall be referred to the Emergency Management Director and/or Department Head responsible for the message in question for the purpose of review and when appropriate, investigation and/or resolution.

IV. System Troubleshooting

System performance issues are the responsibility of the Information Technology Department and Emergency Management and should be forwarded to those departments for resolution with the vendor.