The Community Warning System

A partnership of industry, government and the media to warn and inform our community in the event of an emergency

Contra Costa County
Office of the Sheriff
**History of the CWS:**

- A partnership of County departments, community organizations, industry and the media
- Constructed by the non-profit organization CAER
- Donated to the County in 2001
- Transferred to the Sheriff in 2003
- Funding from hazardous materials fees (no tax-payer money!)
So what should I know?

1. How will I receive alerts?
2. What will the CWS tell me?
3. When will alerts be sent? When won’t alerts be sent?
4. Who sends the alert?
Community Warning System Tools

CWS Activation
The Warning:

- **Alert** people at risk about imminent hazards to their life or health.

- **Inform** people about the basics of an incident, and then direct them to more detailed information.

- **Reassure** people that they have the information they need to protect themselves and to help each other.
When is the CWS Used?
Who Activates It?

1. Automatically from refineries / chemical plants
   - On Health Services’ authority for HAZMAT incidents

2. By CWS Duty Officer for all other incidents:
   - On behalf of jurisdictions, special districts in Contra Costa County
     - Law enforcement activity
     - Fire
     - Flood
     - Neighborhood hazmat
     - Missing or at-risk person
What's that sound?

- 42 sirens throughout the industrial corridor
- Sirens tested at 11:00 a.m on first Wednesday of each month.
- A test siren will be 2 “cycles” for about 90 seconds total
- An actual warning will be 8 cycles for about 3 minutes total
- Audible up to **about** one mile away
## Warning Capabilities:

**SHELTER**
- Get yourselves, family, friends and co-workers to a place of immediate safety
- Bring pets inside if possible
- Health Dept officials have determined indoors is much safer than outdoors in case of a Hazmat release.

**SHUT**
- Close and LOCK all doors & windows
- Turn off ventilation systems such as heating & air-conditioning units, vent fans

**LISTEN**
- Turn on your television and radio for further information and instructions
- Avoid using the telephone unless reporting a life-threatening emergency; the CWS may be trying to call you
All Clear

• “All Clear” means it’s safe in your neighborhood
  (Sometimes an incident is over but there are lingering effects in the area, downwind, etc.)

• The media and industry CAN’T tell you when it’s all clear

• Wait for the word from the responsible health, law or fire officials

• Then open up your house, return home, and go back to normal activities
**BEFORE an emergency:**

- Sign up at: [http://www.cococws.us](http://www.cococws.us)
  - Cell phone – Voice & Text alerts
  - Email alerts
- Like us on Facebook & Follow us on Twitter
- Bookmark website to see a map of alerts
- Buy a weather radio
Community Warning System

Questions?

Emergency Services Division
50 Glacier Drive
Martinez, California 94553
(925) 313-9622

Heather Tiernan, CWS Manager
htier@so.cccounty.us