



OFFICE OF MAYOR JERRY SANDERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FACT SHEET

MAYOR SANDERS UNVEILS CITY'S REVERSE 911[®] EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION CALL SYSTEM

SYSTEM CAN REACH 240,000 HOUSEHOLDS/BUSINESSES PER HOUR

As part of National Preparedness Month and to further highlight the City's increased ability to respond to emergencies, Mayor Jerry Sanders today unveiled the City's new Reverse 911[®] emergency notification call system. The system can deliver emergency messages to as many as 240,000 households and businesses in an hour.

This web-based, community-alert notification system is designed to make mass telephone calls to the public in a timely manner during emergencies or disasters. The system uses a combination of databases and GIS mapping technologies to quickly target and effectively disseminate emergency notification calls to a precise geographic area.

The City of San Diego purchased Reverse 911[®] as another tool to rapidly broadcast emergency notifications to the public in the event of an emergency. The system hardware, software and three-year contract cost \$180,000. The system was paid for with Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Homeland Security grant funds.

When activated, the Reverse 911[®] system uses the 911 telephone database to initiate a voice mail broadcasted message via landline telephones to San Diego residents and businesses in the affected areas. A taped message delivers instructions on how to proceed during the ongoing emergency. Individuals using non-landline cellular and VoIP phones can also register their numbers online to receive the emergency calls.

WHEN WOULD REVERSE 911[®] BE ACTIVATED?

Reverse 911[®] would only be activated for the following emergency notifications:

- Evacuation notices
- Imminent or perceived threat to health, life or property within the City of San Diego
- Disaster notifications
- Public safety tests to verify data accuracy and system operability

HOW MANY CALLS CAN BE MADE?

- The Reverse 911[®] system offers a variety of features designed to meet small, medium, and large-scale—including citywide—notification needs.
- For large-scale disasters and emergencies, the City has the ability to activate the system's Mass Call[®] feature. This feature provides the ability to use a remotely located telecommunications hub with the capacity to make up to 240,000 30-second community emergency notifications per hour.
- During small- and medium-scale emergencies, the Reverse 911[®] system has the capacity to make two 30-second notifications a minute, giving the City the ability to broadcast a total of 11,520 notifications in an hour.
- If more than the 11,520 notifications are required in an hour, the City of San Diego can request assistance from the San Diego County Sheriff's Department via mutual aid. The San Diego County Sheriff's Department utilizes a similar Reverse 911[®] system which includes landlines within the city and can effectively double the notifications per hour to 23,040. When more than 23,040 calls need to be made in a given hour, the Mass Call[®] feature can be activated.

WHAT IS THE ACTIVATION PROCESS?

- An incident occurs and is reported.
- Reported incidents are routed to the San Diego Police Department Watch Commander.
- The Watch Commander initiates the relay of information through a prescribed chain of command.
- The information ultimately flows to the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Public Safety and Homeland Security (DCOO).
- The DCOO notifies and consults with the Mayor, Chief Operating Officer, and Communications Director (Executive Team).
- Executive Team makes the decision to issue or not issue the Reverse 911[®] call.
- A series of final organizational steps are followed until the message is ultimately launched by the San Diego Police Department Communications Division.

HOW ARE THE DEFINED AREAS CHOSEN?

- Notification areas are defined by subject matter experts (Fire, Police, Water, etc.)
- The number of required calls is calculated by the system based on the defined area
- The City Executive Team decides on the appropriate call areas and approves the capacity deployment

WHO BROADCASTS THE REVERSE 911[®] MESSAGES TO THE PUBLIC?

The City of San Diego Police Department is the entity that broadcasts the actual Reverse 911[®] emergency notifications to the public on behalf of the City of San Diego.

CAN CELLULAR PHONE/VOIP NUMBERS RECEIVE REVERSE 911[®] NOTIFICATIONS?

Although cellular phone numbers and VoIP numbers are not currently in the system database (because it only contains landline telephone numbers), these numbers can be added to the system.

To receive Reverse 911[®] on a cellular telephone or VoIP, an individual needs to complete the Reverse 911[®] Cellular/VoIP Addition Authorization Form on the City of San Diego Office of Homeland Security webpage at <http://www.sandiego.gov/ohs>.

CAN THE HEARING IMPAIRED RECEIVE REVERSE 911[®] NOTIFICATIONS?

Persons using a TTY/TDD phone system will also receive Reverse 911[®] notifications.

WILL PERSONAL INFORMATION BE SHARED WITH ANYONE?

The City of San Diego will not share or distribute personal information gathered by the Reverse 911[®] Cellular/VoIP Addition Authorization Form and will use it solely for the purpose of providing community emergency notifications. Personal information is submitted on the form over a secure, encrypted connection for the public's protection.

The information is confidential and proprietary and will not be disclosed or used except by approved personnel only for the purpose of emergency notifications.

