



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, July 1, 2022

CONTACT: Ben Bills
(719) 419-2284 cell
(719) 785-1972 desk

The El Paso-Teller County 9-1-1 Authority Identifies Cause for Alert Reaching Outside Impacted Area On 5.12.22

The El Paso-Teller County 9-1-1 Authority (Authority) identified three communication issues with the evacuation orders sent to residents living in the vicinity of Summer Grace Street/Akerman Road in Colorado Springs on Thursday, May 12, 2022:

1. The alert reached outside the impacted area.
2. The link contained in the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) did not display a map of the affected area.
3. The location information contained in the alerts could be improved upon.

On 5.12.22, public safety agencies issued evacuation orders using Peak Alerts and the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for four separate fire incidents to notify residents impacted by fire activity. The Authority investigated and identified the cause for the issues outlined in this press release.

- The investigation showed that **Peak Alerts** worked as designed, delivering emergency notifications by text message, phone call, and email to residents in the impacted area.
- The notification using Wireless Emergency Alert technology sent at 11:44 AM for Summer Grace Street/Akerman Road reached countywide. The notification was generated correctly in the software by identifying an area on the map for notification. However, the shape used to constrain the alert in Peak Alerts was incompatible with WEA because it exceeded 100 vertices. Vertices are where two or more mapping polygons begin or meet, where two line segments join or meet, or where two mapping lines intersect. Three additional WEA's were sent to the areas of Stetson Hills Blvd/Tutt

Blvd, 3831 N. Cascade, and County Road 11 south of Bear Trap Ranch subdivisions and Lakemoor subdivisions in Teller County and worked as designed.

- The link in the WEA did not display a map of the affected area because of a configuration setting.
- The Peak Alerts member portal (webpage) experienced technical difficulties due to excessive traffic on the web server.
- MITIGATION: A second issue regarding the map did not display on the Peak Alerts member portal was caused by a configuration setting. The setting has been corrected, tested, and working as designed.
- MITIGATION: Authority leaders met with the Everbridge leadership team on May 31, 2022, and suggested a variety of improvements to the software.
- MITIGATION The Authority received feedback indicating the location information contained in the alerts could be improved. Several emails requested alerts that include major cross streets for reference. The Authority is working with the public safety agencies tasked with sending Peak Alerts to include this critical information in future alerts.
- MITIGATION: The Authority issued a training bulletin to public safety agencies advising users to use a simple polygon selection tool to identify areas intended to receive notifications to make shapes compatible with Peak Alerts and WEA.

SUMMARY

The Authority and the public safety agencies will continue to use Peak Alerts to send targeted alerts to citizens impacted by an emergency.

IPAWS is a tool public safety agencies use to send alerts for emergencies that are an imminent life threat via television broadcast, radio broadcast, weather radios, and Wireless Emergency Alerts.