

# TAMI COORDINATOR GUIDE

## Text Alerting, Messaging and Information System

(Revised November 27, 2007)

### OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

In 1997 the Warren County Communications Center began offering an alphanumeric paging feature for dispatches to fire and EMS incidents. The service was first implemented for alphanumeric pagers that volunteer firefighters and EMTs leased from specific vendors (Pagenet and Aquis). The system was later expanded to include text messaging with Nextel cellular telephones. However, it was only able to send pages to a single service vendor per agency. This meant it could not support two or more members from the same agency that used different paging or cellular service providers. Thus, use was limited to provide text paging to only agency-purchased cellular telephones assigned to specific officer positions within that agency from the same vendor.

In 2005 the Communications Center began offering a new, faster, flexible and more reliable service for cellular and alphanumeric pager customers known as TAMI. This text messaging service can be provided to any member of an emergency services agency using several cellular or text paging service providers that allow an internet-based email link to their subscribers. *SMS text messaging* is now used for dispatch alerts and announcement messages that are sent via email directly from the County's Computer Aided Dispatch system. It supports a variety of vendors, such as Nextel, Verizon, T-Mobile, Cingular, AT&T and others.

Each participating agency names one of their members as their *TAMI Coordinator*. This position is responsible for maintaining a personal computer file of participant's names, telephone numbers, and service providers. A downloadable program is available for maintaining this file. A second program is also available that allows users to send participants text pages from an agency Personal Computer using Microsoft Outlook Express and an internet connection.

Fire, Police, EMS and first responders may receive "alert pages" from the Communications Center as calls are dispatched. Other agencies, such as County OEM, County Hazmat, Fire and EMS Coordinators, and the County Fire Marshal also receive *advisory pages* to inform them of incidents that may *potentially* require their response. This is done on a need to know basis. Assisting agencies, such as CERT members and the Medical Reserve Corps (both under the Citizen's Corps program) that are not directly dispatched by the Communications Center can be notified of events manually from their team coordinators using the independent PC-based TAMI system.

# TAMI COORDINATOR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A single point of contact is required for all participating agencies. This position is known as the agency's *TAMI Coordinator*. This person is the only agency member that may contact the Public Safety Information Systems staff regarding TAMI.

## **A TAMI Coordinator needs:**

- Access to a personal computer running Microsoft Windows 98, 2000, ME, XP or Vista
- An internet connection
- An email account
- The knowledge on how to attach a file to an email
- An ability to download, install and use a special editing program to maintain a file of participant information.

A TAMI Coordinator also needs patience - because their agency's participants will be contacting them frequently with changes. Changes occur whenever a participant changes their personal cell number or service provider. They also complain to the TAMI coordinator when they fail to receive a page. Some participants have difficulty paying their cell bills and change service providers and/or telephone numbers frequently. It is also not unusual for people to discontinue their cell phone service and never advise the TAMI Coordinator to remove them from the system. This becomes a problem in the future when the number is reassigned to a new customer who starts getting these strange dispatch messages on their phone.

## **IMPORTANT**

**Under NO circumstances are individual TAMI participants to contact Public Safety staff directly for related text paging issues and questions. Participants must be made aware of this and who their agency TAMI contact is.**

In addition, participants must be advised TAMI is not intended to be a replacement for their voice pagers – although alerts are sent out immediately via TAMI, it has no control on how quickly cellular or pager service providers actually transmit messages to receiving devices.

**It is highly recommended** that every TAMI *participant* read and understand the TAMI PARTICIPANT GUIDE ([www.co.warren.nj.us/publicsafety/TamiParticipantGuide.pdf](http://www.co.warren.nj.us/publicsafety/TamiParticipantGuide.pdf)). It will save the TAMI Coordinator a great deal of time and effort in answering feature, limitation, and “how to” questions about the system and what responsibilities an individual participant has.

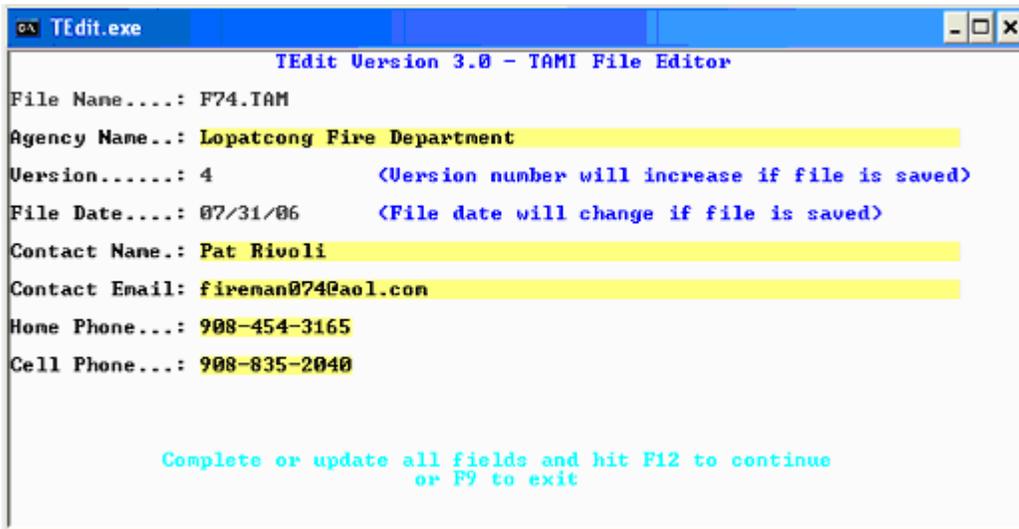
## **DOWNLOADING AND INSTALLING THE TAMI SYSTEM ON A PERSONAL COMPUTER**

- 1) Download and install the TAMI System (includes a File Editor and Message Sender) from the Public Safety web page: <http://www.co.warren.nj.us/publicsafety/downloads/TAMsetup.exe>
- 2) Use the TAMI File Editor to create a TAMI file for members in their agency (e.g. F74.TAM). This program is used to enter the names, cell or pager numbers, service vender code (e.g. Verizon, Nextel, etc.), and comments for each participant in an agency.
- 3) Test your TAMI file by sending a test message using the TAMI Message Sender. It will help identify any invalid entries in your TAMI file.
- 4) First responder agencies approved for Communications Center TAMI alerting then email the new or modified TAMI file to [tamifiles@hotmail.com](mailto:tamifiles@hotmail.com).
- 5) Update the TAMI file when individual participants join or resign, terminate or change cellular service or change telephone numbers.

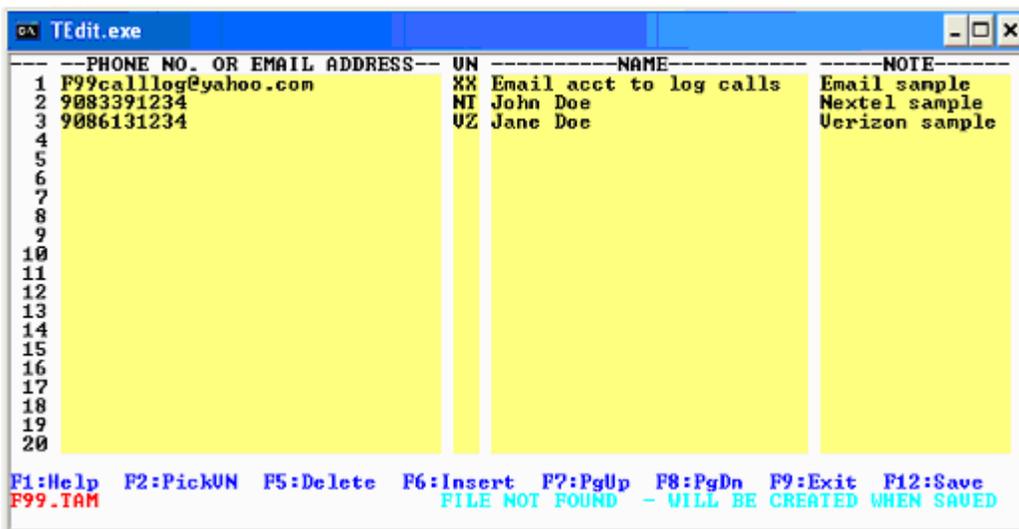
# TAMI FILE EDITOR

The TEDIT program is a special editor used to create or modify an agency's list of participants. Once the TAMI system is installed, double click on the TAMI File Editor icon on your desktop to start the program.

A window will open asking for your agency code. This is generally a letter followed by a station number. Use F for Fire, E for EMS and P for Police followed by your two digit station number (e.g. E83 is Washington Borough's Emergency Squad). Auxiliary agencies, such as CERT, can pick a name up to 8 characters in length – for example CERT94 for Phillipsburg's CERT team, MRC for the Medical Reserve Corps, etc.



The screen above will then appear to display information about the agency and the TAMI coordinator. Use the tab and arrow keys to move between fields. Hit the F12 key to save any changes to this screen. The following screen will then appear.



This is the list of agency participants. Sample entries are provided for new TAMI files – you will want to delete or type over them. Use the Tab and arrow keys to move between fields. Function keys appear at the bottom of the screen to perform basic tasks as follows (hit the appropriate function key to perform that task):

- F1 Display help for this screen.
- F2 Pick a vendor code from a list for the participant the cursor is on.
- F5 Delete the entry that the cursor is on (The program will ask to confirm the delete). Remaining entries will shift up once the entry is deleted.
- F6 Insert a blank line where the cursor currently at (remaining lines will shift down)
- F7 Scroll the list up towards the top. The PageUp/PgUp key also performs this task.
- F8 Scroll the list down towards the bottom. The PageDown/PgDn key also performs this task.
- F9 Exit (close) the program (if you made changes it will ask if you wish to save them).
- F12 Save your changes and continue working.

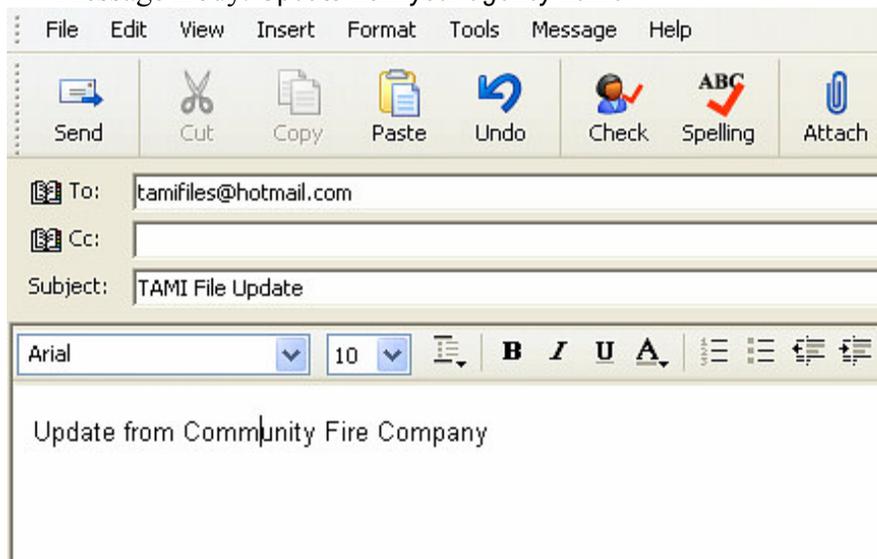
Other useful keys:

- Tab Move the cursor to the next field.
- Shift-Tab Move the cursor to the end of the previous field.
- End Move the cursor to the end of the current field.
- Del(ete) Delete the character the cursor is at.
- Ins(ert) Insert characters where the cursor is at (hit Ins(ert) again to return to overtype mode).
- Backspace Move the cursor one position to the left.
- ← → ↑ ↓ Move the cursor one position in the desired direction.

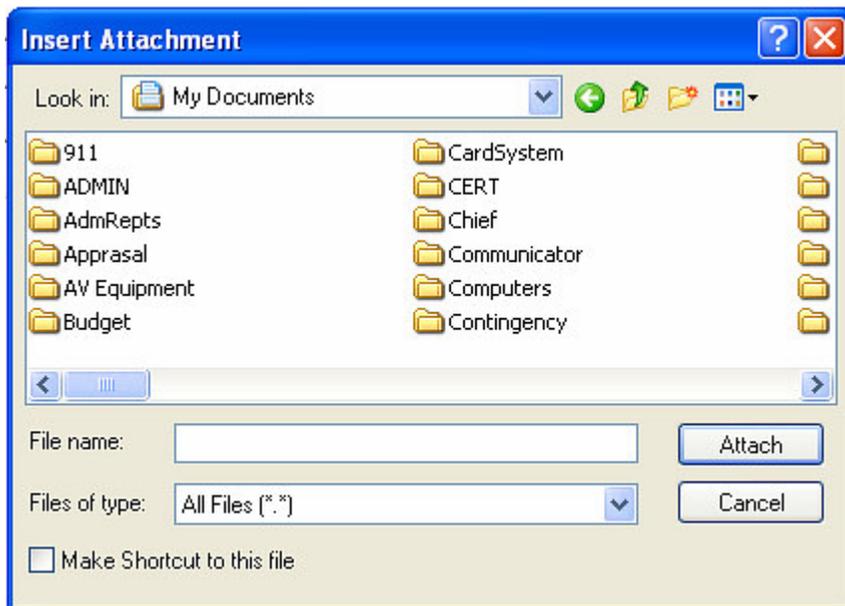
## EMAILING YOUR AGENCY'S TAMI FILE

There are various email programs and services available. They include Microsoft Outlook Express, Microsoft Outlook, AOL Mail, Hotmail, Yahoo Mail, and others. This section describes how to attach your TAMI file to an email and send it to the County's Public Safety Information Systems staff. It will NOT explain how to set up your email account.

1. Start your email program.
2. Click on the button used to send an email. It may be labeled "Create Mail", "Create a Message", "Send a Message".
3. Enter the following:
  - To: [tamifiles@hotmail.com](mailto:tamifiles@hotmail.com)
  - Cc: (leave blank)
  - Subject: TAMI File Update
  - Message Body: Update from *your agency name*

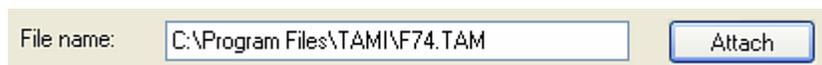


4. Click the Attach button (you will need to attach your TAMI file to this email). This will bring up a window that you will need to manipulate to find your TAMI file:



5. In the File name: area, type: C:\Program Files\TAMI\xxx.TAM

where **xxx** is your agency code (example: F74, E83, etc.).

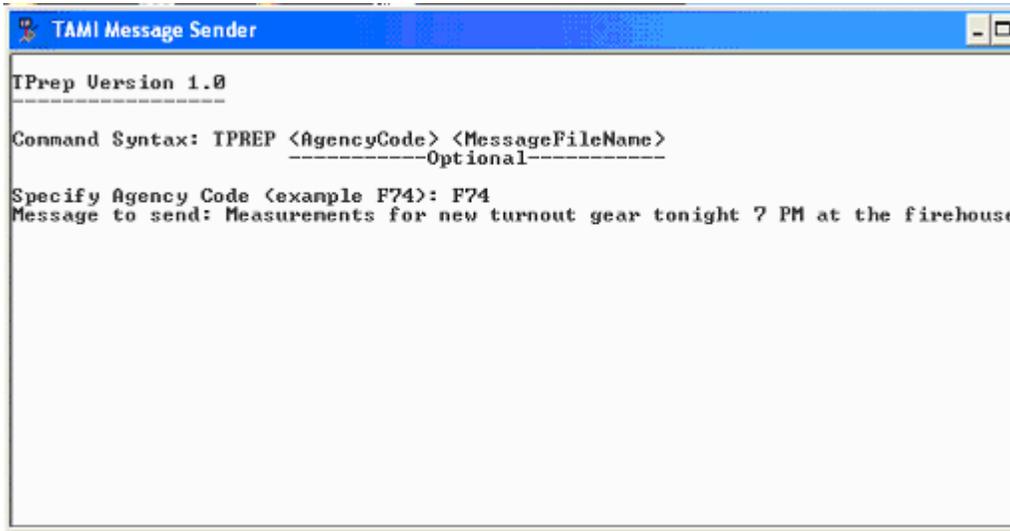


6. Click the Attach button (it may be the “OK” or “Open” button on your email program). You will be returned to your previous email window.
7. Click the Send button (it may be the “Send Email”, “OK”, “Go”, or “Transmit” button on your email program).

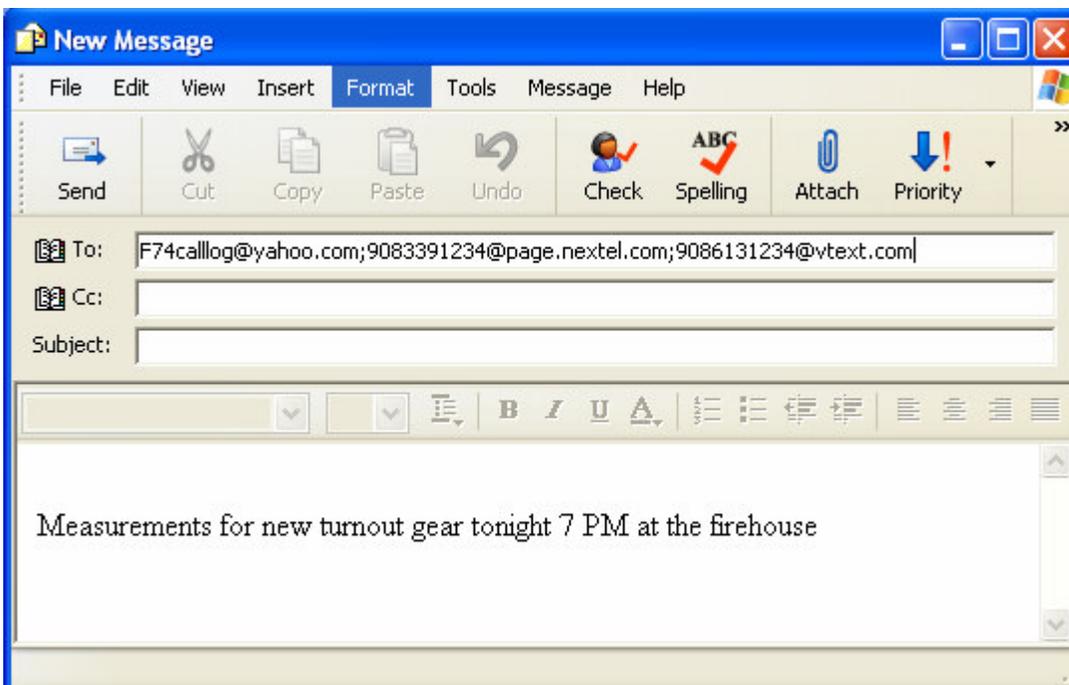
The county’s TAMI staff will email you a reply when they have processed your TAMI file. This will usually take 2 to 4 business days. If you have not received a reply in two weeks, please send an email asking the status of the update and the date the original email was sent.

# TAMI MESSAGE SENDER

This program is used to send a message to all participants. It can also be used to test the participant list to insure that all entries were correctly entered (any invalid entry will be identified). To start the program, double click on the TAMI Message Sender icon on your desktop. You will then be asked to type in your agency code (the same name you used above (e.g. E83). After hitting enter, you will be asked to enter the message you want to send.



The program will read your TAMI file, build a list of participants, and then start Microsoft Outlook Express as follows (note: you must have previously configured Outlook Express to send email and have an active internet connection and email account):



You can now Cc anyone you want with the message. It is strongly advised that you leave the Subject: field blank, otherwise it could cause your primary message to be truncated. At this point you may also check and modify your message. Please remember that most text messages received by cellular phones and pagers are limited to about 120 characters, so keep your message brief. Use abbreviations where possible.

Click the **Send** button and the message will be emailed to all participants to appear on their devices as a text message. Messages are typically received in less than a minute from hitting send.

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## **ASSISTING AGENCIES – INDEPENDENT USE OF TAMI**

Special purpose auxiliary support agencies include CERT members, Medical Reserve Corps, RACES and similar agencies. Privacy laws do not always allow them access to detailed dispatch information provided to first responder agencies on a need to know basis (e.g. medical conditions). However, the TAMI system can be used independently on a PC with an internet connection so that team coordinators can notify their members of activations, special events, meetings and other useful information. This is accomplished by downloading the TAMI system program package from the internet, installing it on an internet capable PC or laptop, creating a file of members using a special program, and sending text messages using an additional TAMI program.