

TAMI PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Text Alerting, Messaging and Information System (Revised July 26, 2007)

OVERVIEW

The TAMI system was created by the Warren County Communications Center as an optional and secondary means of alerting emergency responders via cellular telephone text messages or text pager about incidents or announcements involving the agency they belong to. It is not designed to replace voice activated pagers and only serves to augment voice pagers as an alerting method for emergency responders. It was not designed as a primary alerting method due to its dependency on email internet services and text messaging / cellular providers as third party services.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I get added to the TAMI system?

Each emergency service agency in Warren County participating in the system has a “TAMI Coordinator” that is responsible for adding, changing, or removing members from his/her agency’s member file. Provide the TAMI coordinator with your 10-digit cellular or pager number and service provider (e.g. Verizon, Nextel, Sprint, etc.). **DO NOT** contact the Warren County Communications Center to be added or changed – you MUST work through the TAMI Coordinator for your agency.

Does this cost me anything?

Warren County does not charge for this service - however, your cellular service provider may charge you to receive them. Most plans come with an “SMS text messaging” feature that allows you to *receive* a certain number of free SMS messages a month. They may charge you for each message received over that monthly allowance. You will need to check your service plan or consult your service provider for details.

Who will pay if my service provider charges me for receiving emergency alert pages?

You will. Warren County will not assume any costs or liabilities associated with personal or agency issued plans or overage charges.

I belong to more than one agency. Can I be added to TAMI for all those agencies?

Yes – but you will have to contact the TAMI Coordinator for each of those agencies. Note, however, that you may receive multiple pages for the same incident if more than one of those agencies is dispatched to the same incident (e.g. you are on fire company and the emergency squad in the same town).

I have more than one cell phone. Can I receive pages on both?

Yes – but it will create more work for your TAMI Coordinator because they need to add you twice to their TAMI file. Future updates to any one cell phone could be confused with the other cell phone you have in the system.

How do I find out who my TAMI Coordinator is?

Contact your Chief Officer – they should be able to tell you who is taking care of the system for your agency. DO NOT contact the Communications Center for this information.

Can I be alerted for calls in nearby towns where we frequently mutual aid?

Yes, in theory, but this practice is discouraged. First, that mutual aid agency must permit it. You would then need to contact their TAMI coordinator to be added to their file. You would also need to contact that person every time your information changes (cellular number, service provider, etc.). TAMI Coordinators have a hard enough time keeping their own members information up to date – people they usually see more frequently than you.

Can I receive a “heads up” on other types of calls in my town?

That depends on your function. Emergency management staff at the county and municipal levels receives advisory pages on certain types of incidents, including hazardous materials calls, structure fires, and lost person searches. The County Fire Marshal and Fire Coordinators get advisories on structure fires and other incidents that may involve mutual aid or arson investigation. Lead Forest Fire Officials are advised of brush fires within the county. The County EMS Coordinators receive advisories for specific types of emergency medical calls, and the County’s Health Department and Hazardous Materials Team Leaders are advised of hazardous materials or health related calls. Note that advisory capabilities are provided to these groups on a need to know basis upon approval from the Director of Public Safety. In addition, advisories are just that – “heads up” messages. If a response is required by any of the above organizations, they will be alerted with an additional text message when dispatched to the incident.

Is the TAMI System guaranteed to work all the time?

Absolutely not – and this is the reason it is not to be considered a primary means of alerting. Although it is generally reliable, there are too many parts to the system Warren County does not control. This includes:

- the internet service Warren County uses to send the text alerts,
- the reliability of each service provider’s internet connection needed to receive these text messages,
- the reliability a service provider’s text messaging hardware and software that transmits the messages to customer phones,
- the “load” or “traffic” on the service provider’s network,
- and the customer’s phone itself (is it in range, turned on, charged, and had last month’s bill been paid?)

Also note that the TAMI system relies on Warren County’s Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD) software and hardware systems to be fully functional. This is where the messages originate automatically whenever a telecommunicator dispatches an agency to an incident.

On many occasions, TAMI alerts are received a few seconds before or at the same time normal dispatch (“tone out”) over voice pagers occurs. TAMI alerts are sent immediately from the county to paging service providers. There have been a few occasions where text messages were not received for minutes or hours after voice dispatch. This is attributed to delays in the internet email network, a transmitter lag in a cellular or paging service provider’s systems, or range/reception problems with a member’s phone/pager.

What happens if I change my cell number or service provider?

You must then contact the TAMI Coordinator for each agency you are a member of to provide them with the revised information.

I gave my TAMI Coordinator my information but I am not getting any pages

TAMI Coordinators email their updated TAMI File as an attachment to the county's TAMI system administrators. The county then emails the coordinator back when the TAMI file has been processed – usually within 2-3 business days. The file is stamped with a revision date and version number to assist in tracking updates. There have been times where an agency's TAMI coordinator forgot to email the updated file, or the email did not make it and its receipt was not confirmed by the sender. It is the TAMI Coordinator's responsibility to send updates to the county in this special TAMI file format. Individual participants are not permitted to call the county to request changes or to check on the status of their TAMI Coordinator's activities. Thus, any problem a participant experiences needs to be discussed between them and their agency's TAMI Coordinator. County will only discuss issues with the TAMI Coordinator, or the agency's Officer in Charge if the TAMI Coordinator is not responsive.

What does it take to be a TAMI Coordinator?

A TAMI Coordinator needs a personal computer running Microsoft Windows, an internet connection, the ability to email, and the knowledge on how to attach a file to an email. They also need 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. For more information, see the TAMI Section of the Public Safety Department's web site: www.co.warren.nj.us/publicsafety

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

Any agency member wishing to participate in the TAMI service must do the following:

- 1) Contact their cellular or pager service provider to determine if their subscription plan allows their phone or pager to receive "SMS messages" that are emailed to it over the internet.
- 2) Determine from their service provider which plan is the most cost effective based on the number of SMS messages they might receive each month. Please note that some less expensive monthly plans do not include free SMS messages or may limit the monthly number of SMS messages a subscriber can receive. Most service providers charge a per email or message fee beyond some set monthly limit.
- 3) Participants must test their own cell phone or pager to insure it can receive an SMS message. This is done by sending a test email to their own cellular or pager number over the internet using one of the following email addresses (example: 9083391234@page.nextel.com):

Cellular Service Providers:

ATT Subscribers:	TenDigitCellNumber@mmode.com
CINGULAR Subscribers:	TenDigitCellNumber@mmode.com
NEXTEL Subscribers:	TenDigitCellNumber@page.nextel.com
SPRINT PCS Subscribers:	TenDigitCellNumber@messaging.sprintpcs.com
T-MOBILE Subscribers:	TenDigitPCCellNumber@tmomail.net
VERIZON Subscribers:	TenDigitCellNumber@vtext.com

Where **TenDigitCellNumber** is their 10-digit cellular telephone number.

Alphanumeric Paging Vendors:

AQUIS:	TenDigitPagerNumber@aquispage.com
ARCH WIRELESS:	TenDigitPagerNumber@archwireless.net
PAGENET:	TenDigitPagerNumber@archwireless.net
SKYTEL:	PinNumber@skytel.com
USA Mobility:	TenDigitPagerNumber@archwireless.net

Where **TenDigitPagerNumber** is their 10-digit alphanumeric pager phone number.
Where **PinNumber** is their alphanumeric pager pin number.

NOTE: TAMI will not work with “trac phones” or phones with pre-paid minutes. Only the vendors listed above are supported.

- 4) Participants must provide their name, service provider name, telephone number and any future changes (cell number or vendor change) to the coordinator of each agency they are a member of.

AND...MOST IMPORTANT...

- 5) **Participants may NOT contact the Public Safety Department or Communications Center regarding being added to or updated in the TAMI system, or regarding any problems they experience receiving pages. They must speak with the TAMI Coordinator within their agency.** Please note that TAMI pages are triggered automatically when agencies are dispatched in the computer by Public Safety Telecommunicators. Telecommunicators have not been trained in using or supporting TAMI and cannot resolve any TAMI system problems.

IMPORTANT POINTS WORTH REPEATING...

- The Warren County Department of Public Safety cannot guarantee the delivery of any messages or alerts. Nor can it guarantee the speed of any such delivery due to the system's dependence on internet service providers, email or SMS servers, or the cellular/pager service provider's ability to receive and transmit emailed text messages in a timely manner.
- This service is NOT intended to replace regular voice pagers. It is only intended to augment your current dispatch equipment (e.g. voice pagers). Do not rely solely on TAMI to receive your emergency messages.
- The Warren County Department of Public Safety reserves the right to enhance, modify, limit or terminate the TAMI system service as needed.
- Monthly cellular and text messaging overage charges are the responsibility of the fire or EMS agency or individual members.
- Individual participants must work through their agency's TAMI Coordinator and may not contact the County to be added or modified in the system or to report problems receiving pages.