



Sample Communication Templates for Floods

As you adapt flood templates for use in your organization,
keep these best practices in mind





FEMA says flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States, destroying property and infrastructure and claiming dozens of lives each year. It doesn't take much: Only an inch of floodwater can cause \$25,000 in property damage,¹ and just six inches of water can send a driver spinning out of control.

Time is of the essence when it comes to flood alerts. That's why we created the **SMS text and email templates** below. Use them as guides for your organization's communications efforts.

Four best practices to keep in mind

- 01** Strive for clear, concise language, and don't underestimate your employees' desire for details. Now, more than ever, people want specific information so they can take the appropriate action to avoid injury.
- 02** Set the **S.T.A.G.E.** for clarity by including these essential elements in all critical event communications:
 - **Source** — State who's sending the alert*
 - **Threat** — Describe the potential danger to people and/or property
 - **Area** — Describe the impact area using street names, landmarks and boundaries
 - **Guidance** — Tell your recipients what, when and how to take action
 - **Expiration** — Let your recipients know when the alert expires
- 03** Pre-script your messaging templates for different audiences and situations so that in an emergency, your security team can focus on saving lives — not crafting messages.
- 04** Practice using your templates throughout the year. The best way to tell how well your communication plan is working is to test it through periodic drills. Your tests will reveal any gaps or deficiencies, which you can learn from to boost your alerts' effectiveness.

*Note: We recommend emails include the signature of your CEO, president's signature or chief of safety and security.

Six tips for using message templates

- 01** Does your communications strategy include sending out automated voice alerts? You can modify our SMS text examples to create your own custom voice alerts.
- 02** Every emergency is different. Use the most critical information and modify the template to suit your needs.
- 03** Stick to one topic. Sometimes you will have cases that call for more than one topic, like messages telling employees it's safe to return to work and instructing them on protocols. Usually, though, single-subject alerts are easiest to digest quickly in an emergency.
- 04** Include the link to your organization's emergency intranet site and emergency hotline for more information. Encourage employees to [visit FEMA](#) to learn about their flood zone designations for their workplace, their homes and the routes they use to travel between them.
- 05** Double-check the character count limits for your delivery channels. Twitter and SMS text, for example, have different limits, so staying within each channel's maximum character count is a must.
- 06** Understand your audience. Do employees expect short, frequent updates or more detailed alerts? When testing communications, enable employees to leave feedback about the effectiveness of each channel and the depth of each message's content.

At OnSolve, we're always working to help keep your workforce safe and well-informed. Because the more you share with your employees — before, during and after a major weather event — the more lives you'll save. Read our guide to flooding preparedness eBook for more information.

Visit www.OnSolve.com to learn more.

1. https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/8.5x11_1_inch_flyer.pdf



Communications before a flood

Before a major flood, focus on precautionary reminders and restrictions. Remember, the more you share, the more lives you'll save.



SMS Examples

The National Weather Service has issued a coastal flood alert for [JURISDICTION] until [TIME/DATE]. Take extra precautions on roadways and stay tuned for updates. More info at [INTRANET].

Flash Flood Alert. Use caution and follow posted speed limits to avoid spinning out of control. Monitor [INTRANET ADDRESS] regularly and email and voicemail updates from [SECURITY OFFICE] until further notice.

Dam Breach Threat Level I in effect until [TIME/DATE]. Visit [INTRANET ADDRESS] and monitor local news for updates. Stay tuned for shelter-in-place or evacuation instructions from [SECURITY OFFICE].

Tidal Surge Advisory. Fast-moving, ten-foot waves predicted to reach [JURISDICTION] by [TIME]. Follow directions from [SECURITY OFFICE] and meet at your designated shelter. Prepare to evacuate if necessary.

This is a TEST of the [COMPANY] emergency alert system for the upcoming flood season for [JURISDICTION]. Register for flood alerts by texting [KEYWORD] to 99411. For more safety info and updates, visit [INTRANET].



Email Examples

SUBJECT: FLOOD WATCH in effect for [COMPANY NAME] in [JURISDICTION, BUILDING or CAMPUS]

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

The National Weather Service has issued a coastal flood alert for [JURISDICTION] until [TIME/DATE].

A flood watch means changing weather conditions may bring flash floods and tidal surges. Please monitor [INTRANET ADDRESS] and local news media regularly for updates.

Thank you,



Email Examples (continued)

SUBJECT: [JURISDICTION, BUILDING or CAMPUS] FLOOD ALERTS

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

Please be advised that flood season for [JURISDICTION] begins on [DATE].

Storm surges can endanger lives and are capable of downing power lines, damaging buildings, roadways, bridges and tunnels. Take time now to review your building's evacuation and safety plans. Visit [INTRANET ADDRESS] for flood safety tips and checklists and take the mandatory flood safety quiz no later than [TIME/DATE].

Additionally, subscribe to emergency text alerts by texting [KEYWORD] to 99411.

At [COMPANY], your safety is our priority. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

SUBJECT: FLASH FLOOD ALERT for [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

The National Weather Service has issued a FLASH FLOOD ALERT for [JURISDICTION] through [TIME/DATE].

Use extreme caution and follow posted speed limits on roads. Remember, just six inches of water can cause vehicles to spin out of control.² Stay off bridges above fast-moving water and do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters, which may be electrically charged.

For more information and updates, please visit [INTRANET ADDRESS].

Thank you,

Communications during a flood

Alerts sent during a flood include evacuation and road closure information, shelter information, utility outages and other critical flood alerts. Remember, the more you share, the more lives you'll save.



SMS Examples

[ROAD NAME] at [LOCATION] is closed due to rising river levels. Stay off bridges above fast-moving water and follow detour signs at [ROAD NAME] and [ROAD NAME]. Updates available at [AGENCY WEBSITE].

CRITICAL FLOOD UPDATE: Evacuation orders are in effect in [LOCATION]. DO NOT attempt to enter or return to evacuated areas at this time. Please cooperate with campus security and first responders.

EVACUATE NOW! MANDATORY evacuations for [LOCATION] due to flooding at [LOCATION]. Please relocate immediately to evacuation shelter [SHELTER ADDRESS]. More info is available at [INTRANET].

MAJOR FLOOD DAMAGE at [LOCATION]. Please stay clear of area. Please monitor [INTRANET ADDRESS] regularly. Please stay tuned. More info to follow via [COMPANY NAME] email and voice messages.

TIDAL SURGES reported at [LOCATION]. Mandatory evacuation north of [ROAD NAME], south of [ROAD NAME], east of [ROAD NAME] and west of [ROAD NAME]. Office of Safety and Security has set up shelter at [LOCATION].



Email Examples

SUBJECT: BE READY to EVACUATE – Employees at [ADDRESS, CAMPUS or BUILDING]

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

All employees and visitors at [ADDRESS, CAMPUS or BUILDING], please PREPARE to EVACUATE. Flooding is expected to affect our workplaces and the communities of [COMMUNITY NAMES].

Officials are watching this developing storm and may require you to evacuate quickly if conditions worsen.

Please monitor our Office of Safety and Security website at [INTRANET ADDRESS] and stay tuned to local media outlets for updates. Begin preparations now, and take extra precautions

with relocating anyone with special needs and guide all visitors to [ADDRESS, CAMPUS or BUILDING].

The quickest route to safety is [EVACUATION ROUTE]. Shelters are in place at [LOCATIONS].

Visit [INTRANET ADDRESS] for more information, including the name and contact info of your emergency team lead.

Thank you,

SUBJECT: NO ENTRANCE TO EVACUATED AREAS — Employees at [ADDRESS, CAMPUS or BUILDING]

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

An evacuation order is in effect for all employees at [ADDRESS, CAMPUS or BUILDING].

NO ENTRANCE IS ALLOWED INTO EVACUATED AREAS.

PLEASE COOPERATE WITH FIRST RESPONDERS AND [COMPANY] SAFETY AND SECURITY OFFICERS.

Monitor the [COMPANY] emergency website at [INTRANET ADDRESS] for updates. Shelters are in place at [LOCATIONS].

We appreciate your cooperation.

Thank you,

SUBJECT: FLOODING IN [JURISDICTION NAME] — To all employees at [ADDRESS, CAMPUS or BUILDING]

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

Crews are on the scene at a major levee break at [LOCATION].

Prepare to evacuate. There is an extremely high risk for flooding downstream, along with road, bridge and tunnel damage and downed power lines.

Monitor the [COMPANY] emergency website at [INTRANET ADDRESS], as well as our Twitter page [ADDRESS] and local media channels.

Thank you,

Communications after a flood

Your post-flood alerts should include instructions for returning to the office and reporting damage, as well as utility restoration guidance and other directives. Provide as much detail as possible, while keeping alerts brief.



SMS Examples

[SECURITY OFFICIAL] has declared employees may return to [LOCATION] area. Employee badges will be required for reentry. Visit [INTRANET ADDRESS] for complete instructions.

Employees can return to their workplaces. Employees must display their [COMPANY] badges to enter any building. No unauthorized visitors allowed. Please cooperate with [COMPANY] safety and security officers.

For employees returning to [LOCATION], please report any damage or threats to structures and campus roadways, as well as downed power lines. Submit a damage or threat report at [INTRANET ADDRESS].

Employees returning to [LOCATION]: [POWER COMPANY] estimates power restoration on [DATE]. Visit [INTRANET ADDRESS] for updates. Do not return to [LOCATION] until [SECURITY OFFICE] confirms power has been restored.

[ROAD NAME] at [LOCATION] is blocked due to flood damage. Detour is in place at [ROAD NAME] and [ROAD NAME]. Stay within posted speed limits and do not try to drive on or across flooded roadways.



Email Examples

SUBJECT: Flood Affected Areas — All [COMPANY] Employees

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

All employees returning to buildings affected by flooding must display an official [COMPANY] badge.

Until further notice, advise all visitors that they must go to the [COMPANY] Office of Safety at [ADDRESS] and produce a photo ID, such as a valid driver's license, to receive a temporary badge and authorization.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Best,



Email Examples (continued)

SUBJECT: Report flood impacts — Employees returning to their places of work

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

For all employees returning to buildings affected by the floods, please report hazardous impacts, including damaged roads, walkways, buildings or other structures and downed power lines.

Report impacts or threats by calling [PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you for your cooperation.

SUBJECT: Power outages for employees at [ADDRESS, CAMPUS, BUILDING]

FROM: [SECURITY OFFICE]

[POWER COMPANY NAME] is reporting power outages affecting our area from [STORM NAME].

Crews are clearing debris and making repairs. Use extreme caution on roads and bridges. Only employees with authorization from the [COMPANY] Office of Security and Safety may return to the area. Please cooperate with security officers as the storm recovery continues.

Visit [INTRANET ADDRESS] for additional information.

Thank you,

