



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
ISO CLASS 1 FIRE DEPARTMENT  
*Emergency Preparedness and  
Coordination*



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**Local Emergency Planning Committee**

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**Cambridge City Council**  
**Public Safety Sub-Committee**  
**October 12, 2011**

Emergency Preparedness is a dynamic, fluid process that presents the city with some unique challenges. We are required to strike a delicate balance between informing and preparing the public without causing fear, anxiety and or panic.

The most recent significant weather event; Tropical Storm Irene perhaps serves as an instructive piece of evidence for how we accomplish this task.

As the Director of Emergency Management for the City of Cambridge, I am notified by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency; MEMA, of any impending significant weather events. These notifications run the gamut from large snowfalls in winter months to heavy thunderstorms with potential for flooding in the spring and summer months.

I in turn have set up a notification system within the city. I forward this weather related information to representatives of the City Manager's Office, Police, Public Works, Public Health, Human Services, School Department, Emergency Communications etc. This enables these agencies to be "on the same page" with regards to information.

Several years ago, most mid-level managers in city government participated in training in the National Incident Management System, or NIMS. This training allowed persons of responsibility and authority to learn where they fit into this system that is used widely throughout the country to manage incidents, both large and small.

By having periodic drills and exercises both of the tabletop and full scale variety, Cambridge personnel are able to put their training and experience to

the test. The purpose of exercises is to find where the plans and the management system that utilizes the plans need to be adjusted.

The city recently purchased and implemented a new mass notification system known as Code Red®. This is a software system that allows us to notify residents, businesses and stakeholders about an emergency. The feature of this tool is that it allows us to send a recorded voice message to land line and/or cell phones as well as send a text message to any device capable of receiving one. There has been an ongoing education component to Code Red® recently rolled out as well.

We were able to put Code Red® through its' paces in the days leading up to Tropical Storm Irene. A message was sent to all telephone lines in the database notifying citizens of what the city was doing for the impending storm. We actually couldn't have asked for a more opportune time to try out Code Red®.

In the days leading up to the storm we held frequent meetings coordinated by Deputy City Manager Rossi. Information was shared among the various agencies in attendance with regards to increased staffing and resources etc.

I participated in several conference calls that included personnel from the state as well as the National Weather Service. Information from these calls was forwarded to key personnel in the city, as well as emergency preparedness personnel at Harvard, MIT and Lesley University.

During the storm we were in constant contact with state officials located at the State Emergency Operations Center in Framingham. We actually were able to expedite the removal of a fallen charged electrical line from the fence at the Mt. Auburn Cemetery by speaking with my counterpart at MEMA Region 1 who in turn spoke to the N-Star representative at the state EOC.

Much of what takes place with respect to emergency planning is done on an ongoing basis by developing and culturing relationships both within city government and with people in various institutions within the city.

All public safety resources within the city participate in frequent trainings and exercises. We often discuss hypothetical situations and what challenges these would present. Often times these somewhat informal discussions lead to broader discussions. These in turn often allow us to address problems in advance.

With respect to the response to such disasters, I can offer the following information: The Cambridge Fire Department is well equipped and well trained

to respond to a wide variety of incidents. Among the specialties for which we are now equipped:

- Hazardous Materials
- Dive Rescue
- Collapse Rescue
- Trench Rescue
- High-Angle Rescue
- Tactical Paramedics work with CPD Special Response Team

We have also jointly trained with the Special Operations Branch of the Cambridge Police in a wide variety of situations.



# City of Cambridge Police Department

TELEPHONE  
(617) 349-3300

WEB  
[www.cambridgepolice.org](http://www.cambridgepolice.org)

FACEBOOK  
[facebook.com/CambridgePolice](https://facebook.com/CambridgePolice)

TWITTER  
[twitter.com/CambridgePolice](https://twitter.com/CambridgePolice)

Robert C. Haas  
Police Commissioner

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

## Cambridge City Council Public Safety Sub-Committee Meeting October 12, 2011

Communication is important. And the public has the right, and responsibility, to be informed.

As the Communications Specialist for the Cambridge Police Department, and CodeRED administrator for the City of Cambridge, I am responsible for crafting and distributing information to the public in the event of public safety emergencies. I attend meetings with department heads in anticipation of such events, and work with them to draft appropriate communications that not only inform the public using various outlets, but provide instructions on how residents can prepare, what City resources are available, etc.

The following are the communications activities the City engaged in during the anticipation of Hurricane Irene affecting the region. Also included is information about our future plans to increase the reach of our communications to members of the Cambridge community.

### City Website Updates:

8/24/2011 – Posted Hurricane Irene Advisory and Preparedness Tips from MEMA on City Website.

8/26/2011 – Posted press release with information about City preparations, preparedness tips, shelter information, etc. on City website  
<http://www.cambridgema.gov/citynewsandpublications/news/detail.aspx?path=%2Fsitecore%2Fcontent%2Fhome%2Fcitynewsandpublications%2Fnews%2F2011%2F08%2Fcambridgeupdatesonhurricaneirenepreparations>.

### Local Press on Storm:

8/25 & 8/26/2011 - *Cambridge Chronicle* -  
<http://www.wickedlocal.com/cambridge/mobiletopstories/x678156277/Cambridge-braces-for-Hurricane-Irene#axzz1aUGrBHIF>.

8/26/2011 - *The Examiner* - <http://www.examiner.com/porter-square-in-boston/city-of-cambridge-prepares-for-hurricane-irene-links-and-resources>.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
Dan Riviello, Communications Specialist, Cambridge Police Department  
[driviello@cambridgepolice.org](mailto:driviello@cambridgepolice.org) or 617-349-3237

8/27/2011 - *The Crimson* - <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2011/8/27/cambridge-storm-buttrick-category/>.

### **Communications:**

8/26/2011 at 12:30PM – Sent press release with information about City preparations, preparedness tips, shelter information, etc. to local media.

#### **CitizenObserver**

8/26/2011 at 1:00PM – Sent alert with information about City preparations, preparedness tips, shelter information, etc. to those subscribed to CITYWIDE group.

#### **CodeRED**

8/26/2011 at 1:00PM – Launched CodeRED email and text message notification with 3,051 emails and 2,690 text messages.

8/26/2011 at 6:00PM – Launched first CodeRED all-City call to the 23,066 land line phones that were a part of the Cambridge Emergency Notification database at the time.

#### **Social Media**

8/25/2011 at 4:00PM – Posted Hurricane Irene Advisory & Preparedness Tips on Cambridge Police Department Facebook page to approx. 830 fans.

8/26/2011 at 1:00PM – Posted Hurricane Irene information to CPD Facebook

8/27/2011 at 5:00PM – Posted contact info for NSTAR, Police on CPD Facebook page.

8/25/2011 – Posted Hurricane Irene Advisory & Preparedness Tips on Cambridge Police Department Twitter to approx. 1,100 followers.

8/26/2011 – Posted updates, information to CPD Twitter.

8/27/2011 – Posted updates, information to CPD Twitter.

### **Contacting the City:**

In the event of an emergency people should always contact us by dialing 9-1-1. For other issues, questions, etc., residents should dial 617-349-3300. In the case of Irene we staffed and publicized 617-349-4800 and fielded many calls from residents and were able to respond.

City departments will also work on a much more direct level with buildings or neighborhoods dealing with critical issues if needed. For instance, if there is a building heavily impacted, or neighborhood believed to be especially susceptible

to flooding, etc., the City will send resources directly to the area and knock on doors, help with preparations, evacuations, and any other issues that may arise.

**Present/Future:**

Since the CodeRED call made before Hurricane Irene, and with the subsequent promotional efforts and launch of the Cambridge Alert Network, there are now 27,223 land line and cell phone numbers in our Emergency Notification database as well as 5,640 email addresses and 4,603 mobile numbers to text message.

Residents are encouraged to sign up for CodeRED with their cell phone number and email address, as well as Citizen Observer and Cambridge E-Line, by visiting [www.CambridgeMA.gov/AlertNetwork](http://www.CambridgeMA.gov/AlertNetwork).

The City's promotional effort included press releases, information posted on the City website and various department websites, handouts at City Hall, Police Dept, and other City buildings, a sign in the front yard at City Hall.

Information will also be distributed to approximately 17,000 households in the upcoming Water Department mailers.

We also plan to include an article about the new Cambridge Alert Network in the CityView Newsletter being mailed to over 48,000 Cambridge households and distributed to 2,000 City employees.

In the event of future incidents, CodeRED calls, emails, and texts can be generated and launched in a matter of minutes. This can be done remotely from any computer, providing the person has the correct passwords and credentials.

If events are isolated, CodeRED has the ability to target specific geographical areas of the City. For example, if a water main break occurs in Cambridgeport, we can alert just those residents in the affected area without calling, emailing, or texting residents in North Cambridge who may not be affected in any way by the incident in Cambridgeport.

As the City Manager has said, and as will be our practice, CodeRED calls will only be made in emergency situations where there is an immediate threat to public safety. For smaller scale, more geographically-specific incidents, emails and text messages will be our preferred contact method as to not overuse the system or make frivolous calls, emails, or texts so that residents ignore our communications when a truly serious situation arises.

**Conclusion:**

The City understands the importance of communicating information to the community, and that is why we are continually improving our methods and the tools at our disposal to better share information and keep residents and business informed. After each incident, we review what worked well, and what could be improved upon so that each time a new situation arises, we are better equipped to respond in a more timely, efficient, and effective manner.



# CAMBRIDGE ALERT NETWORK

CodeRED • CitizenObserver • Cambridge E-Line

## **CodeRED**

This service will be used to alert residents via phone calls, emails, and text messages in the event of emergencies within the city, such as:

- Snow emergencies
- Evacuations
- Large scale water outages or other significant service disruptions

Want more info?



## **CITIZENOBSERVER**

This service will be used by police to send neighborhood specific crime alerts via emails and text messages, such as:

- Emerging crime patterns identified in BridgeStat
- Announcements about neighborhood meetings
- Crime prevention tips

Want more info?



## **CAMBRIDGE E-LINE**

This service will continue to send emails and text messages with general information and communications from the city, such as:

- Street cleaning reminders
- Trash/recycling pickup
- City news and departmental information

Want more info?