

Many Sleepy Hollow residents have signed up for Alert Marin. Alert Marin is the best way to receive critical information quickly in a variety of situations such as wildfires, severe weather, flooding, earthquakes, missing persons, and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods. Once enrolled, you receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify such as your home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more.

Alert Marin is only one of many ways that emergency information is delivered. The Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system allows short emergency messages to be broadcast from cell towers to any WEA-enabled mobile device in a locally targeted area. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) requires radio and TV broadcasters, cable TV, wireless cable systems, satellite and wireline operators to deliver important emergency information. Nixle is a subscriber based local community text/email/web browser information service where you can enroll to receive information on your smart phone or computer although it is not a substitute for Alert Marin.

All of these systems require power to operate. If you lose power at your home and if at the same time you have no cell phone coverage like most of us in Sleepy Hollow, you will not be able to receive an emergency message from these systems. Power might be lost by a wind or fire event that damages transmission lines, we could be experiencing a Public Safety Power Shutoff, or a cell phone tower might have limited or non-existent emergency backup power.

There is another emergency warning system that will still function even if there is a power failure. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information including warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All of Sleepy Hollow can receive emergency alerts from the well protected NOAA transmitter with backup power located at the top of Big Rock Ridge above Lucas Valley. The Marin County Office of Emergency Services has an agreement with NOAA which enables them to send out emergency alerts such as wildfire evacuation warnings and orders through the NOAA radio system. A routine Alert Marin message that is meant to target a smaller area of Marin will not be sent over the NOAA radios. An example is that during the recent Woodward Fire, the town of Bolinas was given an evacuation warning and some nearby areas were given an evacuation order. These localized warnings would have targeted a much larger area if broadcast over the NOAA network creating unnecessary confusion.

The Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District (SHFPD) purchased 100 NOAA radios last year and distributed them to our block captains to test the reception and operation of the system. Due to the success of this pilot project, SHFPD has placed a purchase order for an additional 800 radios. The radios will be distributed by the SHFPD block captains to each residence. The radios come pre-programmed with batteries installed. You are not required to use the radio, but we strongly encourage you to put it in the master bedroom and plug it into the wall. If power fails, the batteries will take over to ensure that you can still receive emergency messages. The warning tone is loud both by design and regulation so that you can be woken in the middle of the night. NOAA only issues emergency broadcasts for major events. Red Flag Warnings, storm watches, marine advisories, and other routine events are not broadcast. NOAA understands that if the system is frequently triggered some residents will turn off their radios. Please address any questions you might have to your local SHFPD block captain who in turn will be reaching out to you with information about the program. Most areas of Sleepy Hollow have a block captain, but we still have a few blocks that need a volunteer. We have volunteers who will distribute radios in those areas to ensure that all residents receive one. If you are interested volunteering as a block captain, please contact Sharon Adams, the program coordinator.

