

Stormpulse

Instant weather intelligence™



What's the real value of an alert?
HOW-TO USE WEATHER ALERTS

If a weather alert isn't opened, was it still sent?

You know the drill. Another alarm goes off, only to be quickly turned off. Another alert gets received, only to be quickly deleted. **What's wrong with this picture?**

In this age of media, people are getting better and better at **tuning out noise so they can focus on what's important to them**. Alerts are interruptions, which puts a greater requirement on them to be relevant and important. An alert system that delivers alerts that are neither relevant nor important will be quickly tuned out by the recipients. But **as your business grows, the number of alerts and employees that may benefit from them increases**. In a large-scale enterprise or geographically-dispersed operations, the job of filtering out what's relevant and only sending what's important quickly becomes more than any human router can handle.

Fortunately, just like your email inbox can be trained

to detect spam, **we can train software to filter and route important weather alerts to the right people, while keeping the 'noise' suppressed**. The easiest way to do this is through the creation of rules that tell the alerting system to include or exclude alerts based on the severity of the weather event, the location of the weather event, and the person or persons at that location. These rules can be created by an administrator with the best top-down view of the operation (centralized), or by individual team members that best understand the unique needs on the ground (decentralized).

We can even go a step further and track whether these alerts, once sent according to these rules, are opened or acted upon (clicked), which can signal back to the administrator whether additional rules are necessary to filter out the unused alerts or additional training is needed to get everyone responding as needed.

Alert Types. How do these affect your operation? If you've never experienced them, how would they?

Ashfall	Excessive Heat	Hazardous Seas	Tropical Storm
Avalanche	Extreme Cold	Heavy Snow	Tsunami
Blizzard	Extreme Fire Danger	High Surf	Typhoon
Blowing Dust	Extreme Wind	High Wind	Volcano
Civil Danger	Fire	Hurricane	Wind Chill
Coastal Flood	Flash Flood	Ice Storm	Winter Storm
Dense Fog	Flood	Lakeshore Flood	
Dense Smoke	Freeze	Radiological Hazard	
Dust Storm	Freezing Rain	Severe Thunderstorm	
Earthquake	Frost	Sleet	
Evacuations	Hazardous Materials	Tornado	

Use weather alerts to trigger reviews and preparations.

Once alerts are being intelligently routed by software trained to understand your operation, **you're free to focus on answering questions** like "What should John do if he gets a blizzard warning?" "What should Patricia do if there's a greater than 50% chance of hail in the next 24 hours?"

At the very least, relevant alerts should be viewed as a call for the receiver to role play ("if ...") with an eye towards the current state of the operation. If a severe thunderstorm comes quickly, would anyone have difficulty making it to a safer position? **Are we doing something today or tomorrow that makes us particularly vulnerable to this event?** If so, preparations should be made.

More likely, a relevant alert means that the recipient is going to take an action that puts the business in a better position for safety and continuity. This is putting the business in a **proactive mode rather than reactive stance** for the duration of the event.

Severe weather events can turn **minor lacks of discipline into major headaches and unexpected costs**. Alerts can be used as wake-up calls to pay down any operational debts: "are our rain gutters clear enough to handle a major rain event?" "Have we left any fragile items out in the open that would be damaged by this hail?" "Will the delays caused by this snowfall make any timings or deliveries fail because we're already cutting it close?"

Whatever the weather event, it can challenge and

expose your assumptions about what is and isn't ready and what is and isn't vulnerable. When delivered to the right people at the right frequency, alerts can serve as allies in the quest to be a vigilant and efficient enterprise. §

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF AN ALERT

At 4:25pm CST, the National Weather Service issues a Flash Flood Warning for a small area in Tennessee that includes the automotive plant where Justin is a supervisor.

Based on his company's rules-based alerting configuration, a short version of the warning is automatically routed to Justin as a text message and the full-length warning is sent to him as an email.

Justin follows a link in the email to a map showing the plant's location, current radar, and neighboring events. He knows he can minimize damage from the impending flood by:

- Relocating building contents to areas of the facility above predicted flood levels.
- Initiating electrical system shutdown procedures.
- Ready evacuation procedures.
- If necessary, intentionally flooding below-grade areas to minimize structural stress.*

Justin acts by coordinating the movement of assets away from flood-prone areas while preserving operation of the plant.

* Checklist sourced from *Disaster & Recovery Planning: A Guide for Facility Managers (4th ed.)* by Joseph F. Gustin.