

# San Mateo County Advances Life-Saving Alert Systems During National Preparedness Month

*County leads nation in evidence-based emergency communications, encourages residents to sign up for SMC Alert and supports federal REACT Act*

REDWOOD CITY, CA, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As [National Preparedness Month](#) concludes, San Mateo County

“

Every community, big or small, deserves confident and competent individuals who can send out lifesaving communication when it matters most.”

*Eddie Bertola, Disaster Communications & Mass Notification Expert*

Emergency Management reinforces its commitment to clear, actionable emergency communications through advanced training with operational area partners and continued implementation of research-backed alerts that save lives when disasters strike.

## Hands-On Training Strengthens Regional Response

Earlier this month, San Mateo County hosted a second comprehensive, full-day training seminar with emergency management partners across the operational area,

building on the groundbreaking summit held in July that brought together 37 organizations from eight Bay Area counties. The September hands-on training was facilitated by Dr. Jeannette Sutton and [Eddie Bertola](#), both nationally recognized experts in alerts and warnings. The practical session focused on implementing the Five Elements Framework—ensuring every emergency message includes hazard information, location details, protective actions, timing, and credible sources.

Eddie Bertola, who brings fifteen years of experience with the California Highway Patrol and extensive expertise in emergency messaging and missing person alerts, emphasized the critical nature of proper training. "Every community, big or small, deserves confident and competent individuals who can send out lifesaving communication when it matters most. This type of training provides the keys to making that happen and we train because excuses don't save anyone," said Bertola. Drawing on his background as lead statewide instructor for emergency messaging and AMBER Alert systems, as well as his current role as a national consultant in mass notification strategies, Bertola's training helped ensure that participants understood the life-or-death importance of clear, actionable emergency communications.

"When minutes matter, our communications must be immediately clear and actionable," said Dr.

Shruti Dhapodkar, San Mateo County Emergency Management Director. "This training reinforces our commitment to speaking with one voice across all agencies, using language that people under stress can easily understand and act upon."

### Critical Distinction: Information vs. Alerts

During the seminar, San Mateo County EM emphasized the important difference between general emergency information and official alerts requiring immediate action. Emergency information provides situational awareness through media channels, social media, and public information platforms, while SMC Alerts, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), and Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages contain specific, actionable guidance for immediate protective actions during unfolding crises, issued by trained emergency management professionals.

### Evidence-Based Alert Templates Available Nationwide

Building on this foundation of clear communication principles, San Mateo County continues to make its research-backed message template library freely available to any county or city across the United States. The comprehensive resources include 40 tested message templates for frequent hazards, 112 protective action statements across 49 hazard types, and plain language guidance developed using The Warning Lexicon by disaster communications expert Dr. Jeannette Sutton. These templates eliminate technical jargon in favor of clear language that drives protective action during emergencies.

### Supporting Federal Legislative Action

In parallel to strengthening our internal alerting capabilities, San Mateo County also contributed expertise this summer to Congressman Kevin Mullin's bipartisan Resilient Emergency Alert Communications and Training (REACT) Act, unveiled in August 2025. The federal legislation, supported by San Francisco and San Mateo County leadership, would authorize \$30 million annually through 2035 to improve emergency alert systems nationwide—principles that San Mateo County has already embraced and implemented.

"The REACT Act reflects the systematic approach we've pioneered here in San Mateo County," noted Dr. Dhapodkar. "Evidence-based training, clear procedures, and community engagement aren't just best practices—they're necessities for effective emergency communication."

### Building Regional Consistency

The county's alert and warning initiative extends beyond local boundaries, sharing best practices with counties across the Bay Area to ensure consistent, clear, and complete alerting throughout the region.

"We succeed or fail together," Dr. Dhapodkar emphasized. "When any one of our alerts works better, that benefits all of us. Our goal is Bay Area-wide communication excellence that protects

every community."

Be Prepared: Sign Up for [SMC Alert](#)

As National Preparedness Month concludes, San Mateo County reminds everyone who lives, works, or travels through our communities: emergency preparedness starts with being informed. Sign up for SMC Alert—our opt-in emergency notification system that delivers the detailed, location-specific information you need to make life-saving decisions when crisis strikes.

Unlike standard Wireless Emergency Alerts that reach all cell phones, SMC Alert provides targeted guidance tailored to your specific area within our 20 cities and 18 unincorporated communities. But you must take action to receive these critical alerts.

Sign up today at [www.smcgov.org/dem/smc-alert](http://www.smcgov.org/dem/smc-alert).

San Mateo County will continue advancing evidence-based emergency communications through ongoing training, template refinement, and partnership development—positioning our systematic approach as a national model for how alert systems should work before crisis strikes. When minutes matter, preparation today saves lives tomorrow.

Cari Guittard

San Mateo County Emergency Management

+1 4156080806

[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/853959744>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.