



## Alert Sirens

Dating back to the mid-1990's, some smaller Marin cities and towns began to install and utilize air raid type sirens for emergency warning. These include:

Mill Valley      Tiburon-Belvedere      Corte Madera      Kentfield  
Ross              San Anselmo              Fairfax

In the Ross Valley communities, flooding during heavy wet weather events coupled with rising waters of the Corte Madera creek was the primary reason to install the sirens. In Mill Valley, sirens were installed in the canyon neighborhoods with the primary intent towards wildfire notification.

The topic continues to be discussed by emergency managers both locally and regionally, however, there is no active plan to install sirens in our area at this time.

### Advantages

- Immediate notification over a wide geographical area.
- Can be activated by a 24/7 regional dispatch center at the request of a police or fire commander.

### Possible Drawbacks

- Provides no actual information in which to act upon, thus creating potential confusion and even panic.
- 9-1-1 dispatch centers can be overwhelmed with callers who hear the siren, wanting to know what is going on and what action they should take.
- To be effective and reduce confusion, sirens must be used with an information system that provides an immediate voice, email or text message. This message advisory has been an on-going challenge.
  - o Many communities utilize local short-range AM radio stations to broadcast the informational message. This has limitations:
    - Dispatch Centers unable to fill this role.
    - Can be a significant delay with getting a message broadcast.
    - Updating the message as the emergency evolves is challenging.
- Because a siren is heard over a wide geographical area, persons in other (unaffected) neighborhoods or nearby communities hear the warning.
- Those visiting the area or doing business can be confused and unsure what action to take upon hearing the siren.

Optimum Emergency Notification System for our Area – **Alert Marin** Managed by the Marin County Sheriff's Office – Office of Emergency Services.

- Can deliver incident specific information or potentially life-saving instruction to the precise geographical area(s) affected.
- Provides a recorded message to all listed and unlisted/blocked Marin County landline numbers.
- Delivers a message to cell phone or VoIP phone upon registration.
  - o Provides a voice call, text, email or smartphone application using Everbridge app.

Register at: <https://www.marinsheriff.org/services/emergency-services/alert-marin>