

# **WCC Alert - Help**

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***<http://alert.wcc.vccs.edu>***

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# WCC Alert Help File

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## 1 WCC Alert Account

### 1.1 WCC Alert User Registration and Account Login

All new users must register on the WCC Alert system in order to receive alert messages. After navigating to the WCC Alert website, from the lefthand menu bar, click *New User* below the User Login fields. You are taken to the New User registration page. Follow all instructions to register, answering all required fields (some may be optional) and replicating the text in the Entry Validation picture. If you are a returning user, your WCC Alert login is your contact e-mail address. **Passwords and PINs are Case Sensitive.**

You can register multiple devices (cell phones, pagers, BlackBerrys) under your WCC Alert account. You can also edit and add new devices in the "Edit Profile" section of your *Home* page. Upon registration, you will receive a Welcome message confirming the registration of your devices with WCC Alert account. If you do not receive this registration message when you register your device(s) please make sure that the registration and carrier information is correct. Or contact the helpdesk at (276) 223-4812 or via e-mail at helpdesk@wcc.vccs.edu.

Your WCC Alert *Home* page summarizes your account information, registered devices and alert subscriptions. You can click the *Edit Profile* button to edit your account profile, click the 'Remove Account' link to delete you account on WCC Alert, click *Send Test Alert to all of your Devices* to send a test alert to all of your own devices. You can also see the Tabs at the top of the page and navigate using those - for example, the *Devices* tab where you will edit your devices and the *My Alerts* tab, where you will edit your alert subscriptions.

### 1.2 Add or Change Your Locations

You can add multiple locations that are important to you via the map in the Locations tab. Alerts are sent to pre-selected groups as well as to geographic areas (i.e. in case of a HazMat spill or a flood). By marking a location that is important to you with a pushpin on the map, you are indicating that you would like to be sent an alert during an emergency that is happening near to that location.

The map controls are located on the upper left-hand side of the page and the Navigate control is chosen by default. To navigate around the map, make sure the Navigate control is selected, then click and hold the map with your mouse, and move the map by moving your mouse. To zoom in or out, click the plus (+) or minus (-) button on the upper left-hand side of the map. To add a pushpin to mark a location important to you, click the Add Location radio button, place your cursor over the location on the map, and click your mouse. To delete a location, click the Delete Location radio button, place your cursor over the pushpin you want removed, and click your mouse.

To find an address on the map without manually dragging the map, enter a street address in the Address/Location Finder. Once the address is found, a blue pushpin will appear, denoting the location but not adding it as a location important to you. If you want to add the location once the address is found, you must click the Add Location radio button and place a pushpin on that location.

## 1.3 Add or Change Your Mobile Device, E-mail Address or Delivery Channel

You can add several mobile devices, such as cell phones, pagers, and BlackBerrys to receive alerts via WCC Alert. You can also choose e-mail addresses to receive alerts (i.e. home, work, spouse) or even non e-mail based delivery channels where available. Simply click on the *Devices* tab in WCC Alert and add, change or delete information for these devices/e-mail addresses.

The following table shows some of the supported delivery methods and the parameters that you are expected to provide.

Delivery mechanism (carrier type)	Device Identifier
E-mail account	Enter the e-mail address.
Cell phone	Enter the cell phone's 10-digit phone number (e.g., 202 555 1212)
Pager	Enter the pager's 10-digit number, PIN, or alias/vanity name.

When you want to add devices, note that you can only add one device at a time. To add a new device, first find the header block that corresponds with your device type, i.e., the *E-mail* block for e-mail addresses and handheld devices, the *smart and cell phone* block for your mobile phone, the *pager* block for your pager, etc. Next, select your specific carrier from the pull down menu, for example, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon, at&t, Nextel, Arch Wireless, etc.

Enter the device identifier appropriate to the type of device you are registering. For example, for an e-mail account you would enter the e-mail address, for a cell phone you would enter your 10-digit cell phone number, etc. Once done, click the *Add device* button. Repeat this process for each device you want to add.

When updating an existing device, click on the device you want to edit and make the appropriate change, and click the *Update* button to submit your change.

On your *Home* page you can send a short alert to all your registered devices by clicking the **Send Test Alert** button. This allows you to confirm for yourself that your devices have been properly registered.

## 1.4 Aliases

### 1.4.1 E-mail aliases

Many users have multiple e-mail accounts on their organization's network, for example *john.smith@email.gov*, *jsmith@email.gov* and *j.smith@email.gov* could all belong to the same person. While all of these are valid for receiving email, usually only one is used for sending email (e.g., *john.smith@email.gov*)

In order for WCC Alert to recognize who a reply to an alert comes from, it will need to identify your other aliases (i.e. *jsmith@email.gov* and *j.smith@email.gov*) as valid senders of your replies. Thus, you should add your other e-mail addresses into your devices as aliases.

## 1.4.2 Device Aliases

Similar to e-mail, many devices such as pagers can also be reached through several different identifiers. For example, John Smith's pager can receive pages at PIN 2025551212 as well as at username *john.smith*. Since WCC Alert needs to recognize replies coming from both of these pagers corresponding to John Smith, both devices need to be entered for John in the WCC Alert - for example, the 2025551212 identifier will be set as an alias of *john.smith*. The carrier in this case is the same for both identifiers.

## 1.4.3 Entering Aliases

When entering an alias for an e-mail account or another device, you need to:

1. Select *Add* in the Alias column of the device you want to add an alias to
2. For an e-mail address, type the alias e-mail address (*jsmith@email.gov*) into the e-mail field
3. For a pager or another device, type in the alternative username or identifier
4. Click *Add Device*

## 1.5 My Alerts / Group Memberships

The *My Alerts* tab allows you to see all available alerts and sign up for those you are interested in receiving. Everyone will receive important alerts of general interest on all their registered devices. To receive optional special interest messages (e.g., weather alerts), you need to subscribe to the corresponding alerting group. For example, you can opt to receive weather related alerts regarding California and/or Virginia.

The screenshot shows a web interface for managing alerts. At the top is a search bar with the text "Search by group name or category" and buttons for "Search" and "Clear". Below this is a section titled "My Alerts" with several expandable categories:

- Weather**: Contains "National Amber Alerts" (Group to receive RSIX Amber Alert feeds) with a checked "group member" button.
- Amber Alerts**: Contains "National Amber Alerts" (Group to receive RSIX Amber Alert feeds) with a checked "group member" button.
- Other**: Contains "CNN Alerts" (Group to receive RSIX CNN alert feeds) with a checked "group member" button, "Fairfax County Safety News" with an "add to group" button, "US CERT Cyber Security Alerts" (Group to receive RSIX CERT feeds) with an "add to group" button, and "USGS Earthquake M5+" (Group to receive RSIX USGS earthquake M5+ feeds) with an "add to group" button.
- Traffic**: No items listed.

## 1.5.1 Selecting Alerts

WCC Alert provides you with a list of groups that you have the option to join and receive information from. The groups are categorized by topic (Weather, Traffic, etc.). By default, all categories are maximized so that all groups are available to view simultaneously. Should you wish to limit the number of groups displayed, you have the option of collapsing each topic by clicking on the topic category. To re-open the topic, click on the topic category and the groups will appear. Once you have found the group(s) you wish to receive information from, click on the *Add to Group* button located to the right and the row will be highlighted in yellow. You will be added to that particular group and receive all information sent to that group.

By using the search capabilities you can easily find the information you wish to receive. By entering in a keyword (i.e. Traffic, Weather), you can search for groups whose name or category contains your keyword.

You can only sign up for alerts that are publicly available for subscription. You may also be assigned to receive other alerts by a manager of the system. To toggle your subscriptions to individual alerts groups, click the button next to the alert name.

## 1.6 Alert Categories

The system administrator can set up various *Alert Categories*. These can be used to classify different types of alerts such as Weather, Traffic, etc. If an alert is associated with a particular Alert Category, its exact format (e.g., the *From* field) may vary from the standard. For example, weather alerts may be sent from *weather@alert.wcc.vccs.edu* instead of from the default *alert@alert.wcc.vccs.edu*.

## 1.7 Messages Per Alert

Your cell phone has a limited number of characters it can accept per each text message. WCC Alert breaks an alert into multiple text messages and then forwards them to your phone individually so you will receive the entire alert. See carrier matrix for specific information on each carrier.

To learn more on how to read text messages on your phone visit the following links:

<b>Nokia</b>	<a href="http://nokiasusa.com">http://nokiasusa.com</a> ( <a href="http://www.nokiahowto.com/">http://www.nokiahowto.com/</a> )
<b>Motorola</b>	<a href="http://motorola.com/us">http://motorola.com/us</a> ( <a href="http://commerce.motorola.com/consumer/QWhtml/manual.html">http://commerce.motorola.com/consumer/QWhtml/manual.html</a> )
<b>Sony Ericsson</b>	<a href="http://sonyericsson.com">http://sonyericsson.com</a> ( <a href="http://www.ericsson.com/consumers/">http://www.ericsson.com/consumers/</a> )
<b>Samsung</b>	<a href="http://samsung.com/us">http://samsung.com/us</a> ( <a href="http://www.samsungtelecom.com/contact_us/contact_us.asp">http://www.samsungtelecom.com/contact_us/contact_us.asp</a> )
<b>Kyocera</b>	<a href="http://kyocera-wireless.com">http://kyocera-wireless.com</a> ( <a href="http://www.kyocera-wireless.com/support/how_to/howto_new.htm">http://www.kyocera-wireless.com/support/how_to/howto_new.htm</a> )
<b>Apple</b>	<a href="http://apple.com/iphone/">http://apple.com/iphone/</a> ( <a href="http://apple.com/iphone/">http://apple.com/iphone/</a> )
<b>BlackBerry</b>	<a href="http://blackberry.com">http://blackberry.com</a> ( <a href="http://blackberry.com/">http://blackberry.com/</a> )
<b>Sanyo</b>	<a href="http://us.sanyo.com/wireless/">http://us.sanyo.com/wireless/</a> ( <a href="http://www.sanyo.com/service">http://www.sanyo.com/service</a> )
<b>Palm</b>	<a href="http://palm.com/us/">http://palm.com/us/</a> ( <a href="http://palm.com/us/">http://palm.com/us/</a> )
<b>HP</b>	<a href="http://ipaq.com">http://ipaq.com</a> ( <a href="http://ipaq.com/">http://ipaq.com/</a> )
<b>LG</b>	<a href="http://us.lge.com">http://us.lge.com</a> ( <a href="http://www.lgjoyphone.com/Product/index.do">http://www.lgjoyphone.com/Product/index.do</a> )
<b>Pantech</b>	<a href="http://pantechusa.com">http://pantechusa.com</a> ( <a href="http://pantechusa.com/">http://pantechusa.com/</a> )

## 1.8 Alert Log

You can view a list of alerts that you have received in the Alert Log.

## 1.9 Junk Mail Considerations

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) utilize various methods to prevent unsolicited commercial e-mail (Junk mail or *spam*) from being delivered to users' mailboxes. Some of these methods may mistakenly classify WCC Alert alerts as *spam*, and thus not deliver the alert to you. The following steps describe what you can do to help your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to deliver alerts to the devices you registered on WCC Alert. The steps vary by ISP.

<b>AOL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Go to keyword: Mail Controls (CTRL-K)</li> <li>● Select the screen name</li> <li>● Click Customize Mail Controls For This Screen Name</li> <li>● For version <b>8.0</b>: Select 'Allow e-mail from all AOL members, e-mail addresses and domains'</li> <li>● For version <b>9.0</b>: Select 'Edit' Sender Filter, then 'Allow e-mail from all senders'</li> <li>● Click 'Next' until the 'Save' button shows up at the bottom</li> <li>● Click 'Save'</li> </ul>
<b>Windows Live Mail (Hotmail)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Click on the 'Options' drop down and select 'More Options'</li> <li>● Click 'Allowed and blocked senders' link located under the Junk e-mail section</li> <li>● Click 'Allowed senders'</li> <li>● Type <code>alert.wcc.vccs.edu</code> in the field provided and click the 'Add to list' button located to the right of the field</li> </ul>
<b>Yahoo! Mail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Open your Yahoo! mailbox</li> <li>● Click Mail Options</li> <li>● Click Filters</li> <li>● Click 'Add'</li> <li>● In the top row, labeled 'From Header:' make sure 'Contains' is selected in the pull-down menu</li> <li>● Click in the text box next to the pull-down menu, then enter <code>alert.wcc.vccs.edu</code></li> <li>● At the bottom, where it says 'Move the Message To:' select 'Inbox' from the pull-down menu</li> <li>● Click the 'Add Filter' button</li> <li>● If WCC Alert e-mail has been filtered to your 'bulk' folder, simply open the message and click on the 'This is not Spam' link next to the 'From' field</li> </ul>
<b>Earthlink</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On the 'e-mail' screen, click on the 'spamBlocker plus' sign so all its folders are showing</li> <li>● Click on the 'Suspect e-mail' folder</li> <li>● Check the box next to the <code>alert.wcc.vccs.edu</code></li> <li>● Click on the button to 'Add to Address Book &amp; Forward to Inbox'</li> <li>● Subsequent messages will now go to your Inbox</li> </ul>
<b>Gmail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Click on the 'Settings' link located on the upper right side</li> <li>● Click on 'Filters' and then click on 'Create a new filter'</li> <li>● In the text box next to the From field enter <code>alert.wcc.vccs.edu</code></li> <li>● Click on the 'Next Step' button</li> <li>● Choose any option you wish to enable</li> <li>● Click 'Create Filter' and all subsequent messages will be dealt with by option you have selected</li> </ul>

## 2 Helpful Hints

- Cell phone carriers send messages in batches. If an alert is broken into three text messages, the carrier may rearrange the order, so you might get the second part of a message in your inbox before the first part. When reading a text message you will be able to recognize if it is the beginning of a message, or if it is the second part of a message by the digits *1* or *2* that WCC Alert places in the beginning of the subject field. Scroll around your message inbox until you get the first part of the message, denoted by a *1* after the sender's e-mail address.
  - Delete messages from your phone's inbox once you have read them to save time scrolling between read and new messages.
  - Please tell your friends, co-workers and family about WCC Alert.
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## 3 Top Questions about WCC Alert

### 3.1 How does WCC Alert work?

When an emergency alert is sent by the WCC Alert administrator, you will receive it through all your registered delivery methods. These methods may include receiving the alerts by e-mail, or as a text message on your cell phone, pager or other mobile device. Read these messages promptly and follow the instructions.

Additional instructions may follow throughout the emergency situation so keep your phone near you. Even if the cell phones are busy, the messages should still come through to your phone.

### 3.2 What is text messaging and how do I sign up for it?

Text messages are short messages sent to your phone, similar to receiving a page. Each message contains between 100 and 160 characters, or about 10 words, depending upon your carrier. An example of a text message is the notification you receive on your phone when you have new voice-mail.

Many carriers activate the service automatically. You should check with your carrier to make sure your text messaging is active. See the *carrier matrix* for a list of carriers and contact information.

### 3.3 How can I check to see if my WCC Alert account is working?

Go to your *Home* page and click the *Test alert* button. WCC Alert will send a test alert to all the devices and e-mail addresses listed in your account. You should receive these messages within 10 to 20 seconds. If you do not receive the messages after several minutes, here are a few suggestions:

- Go to the *Devices* tab of your menu and select *Edit* to confirm that your mobile device phone number and carrier entries are accurate.
- Contact your carrier to make sure your text messaging is active
- Make sure your mobile device phone number is accurate
- Make sure you have the correct carrier selected

Occasionally, carriers perform upgrades to their text messaging networks which may cause delays in receiving your alert message.

### **3.4 Who sends out alerts?**

The administrators of this system designated trained personnel to send out alerts. These alerts may go out to everyone or selected groups of individuals, depending on the type of alert.

### **3.5 How many devices/e-mail addresses can I add to my account?**

Generally, you may register as many devices with your WCC Alert account as you need. However, some organizations may limit the number of devices you are able to register.

### **3.6 Where can I get additional assistance?**

If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the helpdesk at (276) 223-4812 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@wcc.vccs.edu](mailto:helpdesk@wcc.vccs.edu).