CougarAlert

CougarAlert is CSU's version of a Rave Alert System that allows university officials to send emergency messages via cell phone text message, voice recordings sent to phones and through email. This system will only be used to communicate during emergencies.

CougarAlert can reach up to three phone numbers per person, plus university email addresses. The system allows students who provide a cell phone number to be reached during emergencies even if they're not on campus, tuned into local news or checking email.

Because there can be a delay between a CougarAlert message being sent and actually reaching your phone, please do not rely on this system for instructions during a sudden weather emergency, such as a tornado. When the county's severe weather sirens are activated, go to the lowest part of your campus building and seek shelter away from windows. Alarms will sound again when it is safe to leave your shelter.

The university will provide additional information when available through the CSU home page, MyCSU and local media outlets.

Update Your Information

Students

Follow these steps to update your information:

1. Login to MyCSU.
2. Click the **Students** link on the top navigation bar.
3. Under the **Student Records** section, click the **View/Update Addresses and Phone Numbers** link.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to update your information.

Faculty/Staff

Faculty and staff must update their emergency contact information in Rave:

> Faculty & Staff Emergency Contact Update

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of situations will call for use of this system and how will the university determine when to use this system?
This system will only be used to communicate in a time of true emergency. It is difficult to predict exactly what those might be, but some examples are situations in which the safety of our campus community is at risk, such as a fire, a tornado or an intruder.

If I get an alert that there is a crisis at the university, how should I get more information?
The university will try to provide a source for additional information when it is available. For example, you may be directed to CSU's Web site, or to check your e-mail for follow-up information. Please remember that during an emergency, the safety of our campus community members will be our primary concern, and any use of CougarAlert will initially address that need.

Can I opt out of the system?
The university believes it serves all of the campus community best by facilitating our communications capabilities during times of emergency. Therefore we highly encourage participation in the CougarAlert emergency response program. If you wish to opt out of receiving emergency communications, you may do so on the emergency contact form.

I've heard these types of systems crash during an emergency. What kind of guarantees is the university going to make that I will actually receive notification of an emergency?
The university has worked to build technology redundancies into the system on its end and Rave Alert System has a number of remote locations with redundant technology on its end. The best way to ensure you receive an emergency notification is to provide as many different types of contact information as you can, including home phone and cell phone numbers.

How frequently will the university use this system? Will the university use this system for other types of messages besides crisis alert, such as for snow cancellations?
While the university may test the system from time to time, at this time, the university has determined that CougarAlert emergency messages will only be sent during times of emergency, when campus safety is at risk or perhaps when campus is closing.

How fast will I get a message if there is a crisis? Is there a time difference between when an e-mail, text message or phone message gets sent? Which one will the university send first?
The university has taken a multi-layered approach to emergency communications to ensure its best efforts can be achieved in warning and informing people during an emergency. Utilizing both internal university communication systems (office phones, the CSU home page and e-mail) and external communication systems, (cell phone calls and local media notifications). The use of these multiple communication systems greatly increases the speed of receiving emergency communication notifications.

How will the privacy of my information be protected?
The university's privacy policies protect all student, staff and faculty's private information. In addition, our contract for the use of Rave Alert System prohibits that company from sharing any of your private information.

I am a parent of a student who never seems to fill out forms! Can I fill this one out myself?
According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the university must receive contact information directly from students.

How can I verify that my student has filled out the form and, if so, has done it correctly?
You will need to speak directly with your student to verify that he or she has filled out the online form and to learn exactly what information your student has provided to the university. Students may update their emergency contact information at any time in MyCSU.

If you are not associated with the university and want to be taken off our notification list, please email CougarAlert@columbusstate.edu and be sure to include the telephone number that was called.