



Brazosport College Alert System

BC Alert System Frequently Asked Questions
06/14/2017

1. What is the BC Alert system?

The BC Alert system provides notification to the college community of threats to physical safety. These threats include severe weather, hazardous materials accidents, physical violence, etc. The system is designed to provide rapid alerts to the entire college community and to provide important information to assist alert recipients in responding to the particular threat. The system is designed to alert students and employees whether or not they are actually on campus at the time of the alert. The BC Alert system is part of the college's overall emergency response plan which includes additional alerting and communications systems which transmit alerts on college property.

2. How are alerts received?

The BC Alert system is designed to transmit alerts using voice to landline and cellular telephones, e-mail, text messaging to cellular telephones and the Mobile App named Contact. Alerts and Updates are also posted on the BC Alert website at www.brazosport.edu/bcalert.

3. How do I download the Mobile App named Contact?

You must first receive an invitation. If you have not received an invitation and would like to, please contact the helpdesk@brazosport.edu. If you have received an invitation please visit www.brazosport.edu/it for instructions on downloading the Mobile App for BC Alert.

4. What do I do to sign up for BC Alert?

All current students and employees are automatically enrolled in the BC Alert system. If you are a student you should make sure that all of your contact information is current by consulting the Registrar's office. If you are an employee you should make sure that all of your contact information is current by consulting the Human Resources office. In particular, please make sure that we have a valid mobile phone number for you. Student data is updated at the beginning of each semester. Employee data is updated each semester and when employees are hired or leave the college.

5. What if I don't want to participate in BC Alert?

Participation in the alert system is mandatory for all students and employees of Brazosport College. The system is designed to increase the safety of all college students and employees. Just as we do not give individuals the opportunity to opt out of receiving fire alarm warnings and other safety alerts on campus, we require that all individuals participate in the BC Alert system.

6. How does the system work?

The BC Alert system is hosted by a national company with many years of experience in providing alerts of this type. Their systems are designed to rapidly generate many thousands of phone calls, e-mails and text messages. The system is hosted on multiple servers in multiple locations and is accessible to authorized college emergency response personnel. When an alert is initiated, the system immediately begins placing phone calls and transmitting e-mail messages.

Only a limited number of college employees are authorized to generate alerts using the system. These individuals have access to a web application that allows them to select an alert to send and to monitor the progress of the alert transmission.

7. Who is authorized to send alerts using BC Alert?

In addition to the President of the college, the college security department and the college Deans are authorized to send alerts. In addition, the Information Technology department is authorized to initiate alerts when instructed to do so by one of these individuals.

8. Will the information in the BC Alert system be used for any other purposes?

No. The BC Alert database will not be used for any other purposes and will not be resold or otherwise distributed. There are strict security controls in place to prevent unauthorized access to this information. You will not receive any "spam" or other undesired communication due to your participation in BC Alert. The only messages you will receive from Brazosport College will be emergency or other urgent information and routine system test messages approximately four times per year. You will only receive alerts, including test messages, if you are a current student or current employee of the college. Test messages to students will typically be sent sometime in the three weeks of classes (following the official reporting date or "12th class day". The college reserves the right to test the system as often as is required to make sure that important alerts are being delivered.

9. How do I update my contact information?

For students, the BC Alert database is loaded with data from the POISE student information system. Most students are more familiar with the myBC online registration and grade system which is part of the POISE system. Students are not able to update their contact information themselves. You should contact the Registrar's office any time your contact information changes. They will then update your records in the POISE system.

For employees, the BC Alert database is loaded from Empower. You should contact the Human Resources office any time your contact information changes.

10. I am no longer a student at Brazosport College. How do I get out of the BC Alert system?

Once grades have been entered and the semester is considered to have ended, all student records are deleted from the BC Alert database. If you are not a current student and receive an alert, please contact the Information Technology Helpdesk at 979-230-3266 or helpdesk@brazosport.edu for assistance.

11. What phone number will show up on Caller ID when I receive a call from BC Alert?

When you receive a call you will see the phone number 979-230-3500. You should program this phone into your contacts list on your mobile phone and consider assigning it a special audible ring tone or other alert sound that will be active even if you have your phone on vibrate mode. If you receive an alert, you can call this number to hear a recording containing information about the current alert situation. However, for most situations your best source of current information is the main college web site at www.brazosport.edu. If there is an event which causes a failure of access to the main college web site, there is a special emergency web site at emergency.brazosport.edu. Notice that you type "emergency" in place of the typical "www" to reach this site.

12. Will I receive text messages on my mobile phone?

Yes, if your device is capable of receiving text messages, the BC Alert system is designed to use this as one of the methods of delivering alerts.

13. It costs me money to receive text messages. Is the college going to reimburse me?

No. In most cases the cost for a text message is approximately ten cents. We believe that most people would find this a small price to pay for receiving

important information that may affect their safety or well-being. Assuming that you received several test messages from BC Alert along with one or two actual emergency messages, your cost per year would be less than one dollar.

14. Can I update my contact information online?

No. At this time all updates must be done by contacting the Registrar's office. Their offices are located in the downstairs E-Wing at the front of the main building on the main campus. If you change your contact information after the first week of classes, please contact the Information Technology Helpdesk so that we can load your updated information into the BC Alert system.

Employees should contact the Human Resources office to update contact information.

15. I am visually-impaired or hearing-impaired. How will I receive alerts?

The BC Alert system sends both audio and text alerts via several methods. Visually-impaired or hearing-impaired individuals should find one of the methods suitable. In addition, the system is compatible with TTY Phones.

16. Is there a fee for the system?

No. Brazosport College has contracted with the vendor to provide this service. It is part of the college's overall information technology budget. However, employees and students may be responsible for fees to their mobile phone provider, depending on the terms of their service contract.

17. Are there other types of alerting systems in use on campus?

Yes, Brazosport College has additional alerting systems including fire alarms in most facilities. In addition, the college's phone system has text and voice alerting capabilities. You may receive alerts from any or all of these systems at the same time depending on the nature of the particular event. Due to the possible lag time in receiving messages from BC Alert, if you receive conflicting information from a fire alarm or via the college phone system, you should rely on the local system for the most up to date information. For example, a BC Alert may be issued warning of a tornado alert. Subsequently, a tornado may disable phone lines or other services and prevent the college from sending out a second BC Alert warning that a tornado has touched down near the campus. You might receive this information via the college telephone system which would also instruct you to shelter in place away from doors and windows.

18. Other students or employees received an emergency or test message via BC Alert but I did not. What should I do?

You should first check any answering machines or voicemail systems to make sure that you did not simply miss the call or calls. The system will try to contact you multiple times over a period of time so the alert may have been received on one of your other contact methods.

If you don't find any evidence of a contact at any of your contact locations, please contact the Registrar's office if you are a student and Human Resources office to make sure that your information is up to date. If your information is correct, please contact the Information Technology Helpdesk at helpdesk@brazosport.edu, 979-230-3266 or in room I-100 on the main campus for assistance.

19. What should I do if I receive an alert from BC Alert?

Detailed information will usually be included in the alert message. Detailed information about sheltering in place and other typical actions is posted in classrooms and offices throughout the college.

You should also spread the word by telling those around you about the alert you've received. It is possible that some people around you did not receive the alert so word of mouth is very important for helping to spread the word.

20. Who do I contact for additional information?

Please contact the Information Technology Helpdesk at helpdesk@brazosport.edu, 979-230-3266 or in room I-100 on the main campus for assistance.