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### Emergency Alerts To Keep You Safe

*Alerts Before Concord Tornado Allowed Residents to Take Shelter*

FRAMINGHAM, MA – The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) encourages all residents of the Commonwealth to use their cellphones to receive emergency alerts and warnings about imminent severe weather and other threatening situations. This past Monday morning, many residents of the Concord, Massachusetts neighborhood that was hit by a tornado were awoken fifteen minutes before the tornado hit by emergency alerting systems on their cellphones. The advance warning allowed those residents to move to safety within their homes before the tornado hit.

Using the emergency alerting capabilities of your cellphone to be informed during emergencies is an important component of emergency preparedness. Every family should have multiple methods for receiving emergency alerts, including at least one with an audible alert to wake you in the middle of the night.

“The tornado that struck Concord in the overnight hours on August 22<sup>nd</sup> while residents were sleeping was a reminder of the importance of receiving emergency alerts,” said Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Director Kurt Schwartz. “Residents in the tornado warning area received alerts through the Wireless Emergency Alerts system on their cellphones. Additionally, alerts were sent to cellular devices loaded with MEMA’s free Massachusetts Alerts app. These warnings allowed residents to take shelter before the tornado struck.”

**Wireless Emergency Alerts** – Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are short text-like messages sent to cellphones in an affected area. WEAs are generated automatically when the National Weather Service issues warnings for the most severe weather conditions, including tornados, flash floods, and hurricanes. WEAs also are issued for other types of emergencies, including AMBER alerts. In Massachusetts, MEMA has the ability to issue WEAs for all types of imminent threats and hazards. You do not need to subscribe to any service to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts; the alerts are sent to all WEA-enabled devices in an impacted or threatened area, and most newer cell phones are automatically enabled to receive WEAs. MEMA encourages residents to check their cellphone settings to ensure that WEAs are enabled to be able to receive emergency alerts.

For iPhones:

- Go to Settings > Notifications

- Scroll to the bottom in the “Government Alerts” section and make sure that “AMBER Alerts” and “Emergency Alerts” are turned on.

For Androids

- Go to Messages > Settings OR you may have an “Emergency Alerts” icon
- Go to the “Emergency Alerts” section and make sure that “Extreme Alert”, “Severe Alert” and “AMBER Alerts” are turned on.

For other cell phone models or for technical information, contact your cell phone carrier.

**Massachusetts Alerts** – The *Massachusetts Alerts* app provides weather warnings from the National Weather Service and emergency alerts and information from MEMA based on your location, proximity to an event or incident, and the preferences you select. The free *Massachusetts Alerts* app is available for [Android](#) and [iPhone](#) devices. To learn more about *Massachusetts Alerts* and frequently asked questions, visit: [www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp](http://www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp).

For more information about types of alerting and information tools, visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/be-prepared/be-informed/>

MEMA is the state agency charged with ensuring the state is prepared to withstand, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and disasters, including natural hazards, accidents, deliberate attacks, and technological and infrastructure failures. MEMA's staff of professional planners, communications specialists and operations and support personnel is committed to an all hazards approach to emergency management. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state and local government agencies, and with the private sector - individuals, families, non-profits and businesses - MEMA ensures the Commonwealth's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating threats and hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and strengthening our capacity to rebuild and recover. For additional information about MEMA and Hurricane Preparedness, go to [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema). Continue to follow MEMA updates on *Twitter* at [www.twitter.com/MassEMA](http://www.twitter.com/MassEMA); *Facebook* at [www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA](http://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA); and *YouTube* at [www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA](http://www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA).

**Massachusetts Alerts**: to receive emergency information on your smartphone, including severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service and emergency information from MEMA, download the *Massachusetts Alerts* free app. To learn more about *Massachusetts Alerts*, and for information on how to download the free app onto your smartphone, visit: [www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp](http://www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp).