

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Q. What is SUNY Alert?**

A. SUNY Alert is an alert system that ESF has implemented in conjunction with the State Office of Emergency Management (SEMO) and SUNY System Administration. SUNY Alert enables the University to send out critical emergency information about this campus which can be disseminated concurrently through email, phone and text messaging.

#### **Q. How can I participate?**

A. You are automatically enrolled with your contact information that you provided when registering for classes. You are strongly encouraged to update this information and can do so each time you log into My ESF by clicking the NY-Alert Contact Information tab.

#### **Q. What is required of me to participate?**

A. Just one email address is required to participate. If you are a student, your SYR email address will automatically be a part of this system as long as you are a registered student.

#### **Q. How does NY Alert work?**

A. Your contact information will be submitted to the NY Alert secure database. If there is a CRITICAL EMERGENCY on campus, University officials will notify NY Alert with appropriate information. You will then be notified by email, by phone and/or text messaging within a very short period of time. This is because SUNY Alert has the capability of sending thousands of emails and making thousands of phone calls within minutes.

#### **Q. When can I expect to receive a message from ESF using SUNY Alert?**

A. SUNY Alert is set up to address CRITICAL INCIDENTS on campus where there is IMMINENT DANGER to others in the campus community. SUNY Alert will be used judiciously and only for an emergency that affects the entire campus.

#### **Q. If a message is sent using SUNY Alert, what can I expect to get?**

A. If you choose to submit all of your contact information, such as email address, phone number and text message number, then you can expect to get information by all of these means in the event that an alert is issued. For example, if you enter two email addresses, you will get the message in both mailboxes. If you enter phone and text message information, you

will get called and/or texted at these numbers. Remember: texting is limited in characters, so you should NOT rely on this method of communication for complete information.

**Q. Will SUNY Alert become the only means of communicating with the ESF campus community in the event of an emergency?**

A. The SUNY Alert system is just one more tool that can assist us with getting the word out quickly regarding critical incident information. This alert system will complement methods we already use, including broadcast emails, alerts on the ESF homepage, person-to-person contact, bulletin board postings and local media outreach.

**Q. How do I know I am getting an email from SUNY Alert?**

A. Email messages from SUNY Alert will have NYAlert.Admin@NYAlert.gov in the "From" field.

**Q. How reliable is text messaging in the case of an emergency?**

A. SUNY Alert has the ability to text message you as part of this alert system. When signing up for this service, you may enter your phone number in the text message field. You should be aware, however, that texting is the least reliable means of getting this emergency information. Texting is limited to a certain number of characters; therefore the information you receive by text will be short and not necessarily give you complete information. You should always check your email once you receive a text message from the alert system.

**Q. What can I expect in a text message from SUNY Alert?**

A. You can expect abbreviated information concerning the emergency that is limited to the number of characters your phone accepts in one text. If you receive a text message regarding an emergency situation on campus, you should check your email as soon as possible.

**Q. What does it cost to participate in SUNY Alert?**

A. Standard charges from your cell phone provider will apply for voice and text notifications at this time.

**Q. Will SUNY Alert leave a voice mail message if the phone is answered by an answering machine?**

A. This system is NOT able to detect an answering machine or answering service. The voice notification message will start 3 seconds after a line is picked up, regardless if it is a person,

answering machine, or answering service. Because of this, some participants might only hear part of the message.

**Q. How many phone attempts will SUNY Alert make when calling?**

A. If there is no answer or a busy signal, SUNY Alert will continue to try to contact each phone number a maximum of 3 times.

**Q. Where is the personal contact information that I enter into MyESF stored and how will it be used?**

A. The personal contact information is stored at ESF and is sent on a weekly basis to SUNY Alert. You should be assured that SUNY Alert is a secure database and the information contained in this database will not be provided or otherwise disclosed except as necessary to respond to an emergency. Remember however, that all alert systems are only as good as the information you provide. Please type your information carefully and double check it before saving.

**Q. How does a person update their SUNY Alert emergency contact information?**

A. At SUNY ESF, you can update your contact information by logging on to MyESF and choosing NY Alert Emergency Contact Info.

**Q. What if my parents want to get these alerts too?**

You can enter your parents' email and phone information from your MyESF site as your secondary information. This way, whenever an alert goes out, they would receive it as well, either by email, phone, text or all three.

**Q. Will I be prompted on line to sign up for NY Alert?**

A. As you sign in to MyESF, you will be prompted to update your contact information. If you are a faculty or staff member, your ESF email address and office telephone will be maintained in the NY Alert database. All employees are encouraged to sign on to Faculty & Staff portal and update your email and/or phone information in order to receive NY Alert information.

**Q. I've heard NY Alert advertised on the radio and TV. Is there a difference between NY Alert and SUNY Alert at ESF?**

NY Alert ([www.nyalert.gov](http://www.nyalert.gov)) is New York State's all-hazards alert and notification web based portal. This website contains critical emergency-related information, public instructions, and life-safety public information for citizens in the state of New York. The information posted on

this web site includes severe weather warnings, significant highway closures, other emergency conditions, state response actions, and protective actions that are recommended by State and local authorities.

The SUNY Alert emergency system is a spinoff of this system that provides critical emergency information for the participating SUNY colleges. SUNY ESF stakeholders will only receive SUNY-Alerts issued by ESF authorized senders.