Recommendation for Successful Messaging

Using SMS with Everbridge

Purpose

The purpose for this document is to provide you with recommendations for successfully using Short Message Service (SMS), i.e. texting, as a delivery method with your Everbridge notifications.

Scope

The scope of this document is the SMS Device 1, SMS Device 2, and One Way SMS delivery methods offered in the Everbridge product suite. These are the "true" SMPP SMS contact paths addressable using only the subscriber's phone number. This document does not cover the use of sending text messages using the SMTP (email) format.

SMS from Everbridge

If you use the true SMPP SMS delivery methods offered in the Everbridge application, then your contacts will see the message arrive from a numeric identifier. The numeric identifier is assigned to Everbridge and does not change from messages to message. The numeric codes are provided later in this document.

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1. Before You Send the First SMS Message

1.1 Identify contacts who do not have SMS or text messaging as part of their mobile data plan.

Purpose	This will ensure your contacts will receive the SMS messages you send from the Everbridge application.
Recommendation	Ask your contacts to ensure: • Text messaging is enabled in their mobile phone data plans • Text messaging plan allows them to receive SMS messages from a Short Code or international SMS with a long numeric code as the sender ID; many mobile phone subscribers do not know that they must explicitly request this feature from their mobile phone providers
Unintended Consequences	Contacts may not receive your notification

1.2 Identify contacts who cannot receive SMS messages from Short Codes or international SMS with a long numeric Sender ID on their mobile device.

Purpose	This will ensure your contacts can receive SMS messages you send from the Everbridge application.
Recommendation	Ask your contact to ensure their mobile device can receive SMS messages from Short Codes or international SMS with long numeric Sender ID. • All carriers (domestic and international) treat SMS messages from Short Codes or Long Codes differently than peer-to-peer text messages; the ability to receive text messages does not guarantee the subscriber can receive text messages you send from Everbridge • Some mobile phone manufacturers (with the knowledge of the local mobile phone provider) do not automatically allow the device to receive SMS messages from Short Codes or international SMS from a long numeric Sender ID • The subscriber must contact the carrier or the mobile phone manufacturer for instructions on how to change the factory settings on the phone in order to receive SMS messages arrive with a Short Code or an international SMS message with a long numeric Sender ID
Unintended Consequences	Contacts may not receive your text message

1.3 Ensure contacts can confirm receipt of your messages.

Purpose	This will ensure you will see confirmations from SMS contact paths on your Everbridge reports if you will be requiring contacts to confirm receipt. It will also help you identify any problems with the delivery of the original message.
Recommendation	*Note: If you send a message via an SMS delivery method and you require your recipients to confirm receipt, then Everbridge appends a short instruction to the end of your message:* "*To confirm: reply with 'YES' and send*" Ensure your contacts have two-way messaging enabled in their mobile phone data plans before you send the first message. • Many mobile phone subscribers do not know that they must explicitly request this feature from their mobile phone providers for SMS messages sent with a Short Code or international SMS from a long numeric Sender ID • Mobile phone providers in some regions of the world do not allow subscribers to reply to international SMS from a long numeric Sender ID
Unintentional Consequences	You do not see a confirmation on your Everbridge broadcast reports for some contacts

1.4 Instruct contacts to use their mobile device aliasing feature to create a contact alias for your SMS messages.

Purpose	This will ensure your contacts will read your messages instead of deleting them from their message inbox.
Recommendation	*Note: Some mobile phone carriers in destinations outside of Canada and the United States may replace the Everbridge identifier with a code of their choosing; ask your contacts to first confirm that you sent the message before they create an alias for the carrier identifier in their list of phone contacts.* When you send a message via an SMS delivery method from the Everbridge application, your contacts will not know immediately that the message is from you. Contact Everbridge Customer Support for the FROM code that may be displayed in your member's message inbox on their mobile device.
Unintended Consequences	• Contacts will delete messages without reading the content • Contacts will ask mobile phone providers to block messages received with the above identifiers

	• Contact complaints to mobile phone providers may result in none of your contacts being able to receive messages from you in the future

1.5 Send a test message to all contacts using only the SMS contact paths Everbridge provides.

Purpose	This will help you to identify any problems with the delivery of the message and the receipt of confirmations.

Recommendation	Testing approach:
	
	• Use one of the Email Address delivery methods in Everbridge to send an email to your contacts informing them you will be sending them a text message from the Everbridge application to their mobile device using SMS
	• Request confirmation of the email notification in order to address any questions after your test message
	• Provide your contacts the following information about the test text message:
	    o Date and time you will send the message
	    o Everbridge Identifier they will see in the FROM field in their message inbox
	    o Subject or title for the message
	    o Content of the message
	    o Instructions for confirming receipt of the message, if applicable
	    o Company policy for text messaging charges your recipients will incur with the receipt of the message and the reply to the message (if you require a reply)
	• Send a test message first to yourself and other Organization Administrators to identify potential challenges before you send the first test message to your contacts
	• Send a test message to all your contacts who have SMS capabilities on their mobile devices at the start of your implementation
	• Send a test message when you add a contact to your Everbridge contact directory if the contact has SMS capabilities on his/her mobile device
	• Send a separate test message to contacts based on the destination region of the world to more easily and quickly identify issues with the delivery of the message and the receipt of replies

Unintended Consequences	• Contacts will not read message • Contacts will not respond to message • Contacts will not know who sent the message and the purpose for the message • You will not have good feedback from your contacts • Your test will not achieve the desired results or goals

1.6 Distribute a company policy on the use of SMS as a mass notification communication method.

Purpose	This will ensure a higher rate of compliance with message confirmations.
Recommendation	Recommended minimum content: • Mobile phone carriers may charge subscriber for messages received according to the terms in their subscriber agreements • Mobile phone carriers may charge subscriber for messages sent according to the terms in their subscriber agreements • Messages may arrive as one message on their device or as multiple, sequenced messages on their device • Instructions for your contacts should handle carrier message charges
Unintended Consequences	• Contacts may block SMS messages from Short Codes or long numeric Sender IDs due to carrier charges • Contacts will not know to whom they can direct their questions regarding messages sent to their mobile devices • Contacts may not know your company will compensate for carrier charges

2. Creating an SMS Message

2.1 Avoid creating messages that contain more than 120 characters.

Purpose	This will ensure your contacts receive one text message on their mobile device.
Recommendation	_Note_: If you request confirmation from your message recipients, then _Everbridge appends instructions to your message:_ "To confirm: reply with 'YES' and send".
	Recommendations:
	• Refer your contacts to an email message or Web page that contains more detailed information instead of sending a detailed message via SMS
	• Apply the 3-3-30 rule for short, effective messages; see Everbridge document titled "Aware KOTG – Message Maps"
	• Use a short message title for your message since the content of your title is part of your SMS message
	• Use the Character Counter provided on the Everbridge application page to monitor the length of your message
	• Use abbreviations that are well understood by your contacts
	• Use acronyms familiar to your contacts
	• Do not send message containing text in different languages; send a separate message to each language-dependent group of contacts
	• See information "Special Characters" elsewhere in this document
Unintended Consequences	• Messages longer than 160 characters sent to mobile phone carriers other than U.S. Cellular will be split into multiple messages and delivered as multiple, sequenced messages to SMS subscribers
	• U.S. Cellular will truncate messages longer than 150 characters; in other words, your contacts who are subscribers of U.S. Cellular will not see any characters past the 150th character in the message
	• Mobile phone carriers do not guarantee the delivery of messages in the order in which the larger message as split into smaller messages ○ AT&T is the only mobile phone carrier who combines the split message parts into the original longer message upon delivery to the subscriber's mobile device
	• Mobile phone carriers in international destinations may truncate long messages at the 160th character – in other words, your message recipients may not see any characters past the 160th character

2.2 Use plain text characters in your message.

Purpose	This will ensure the mobile phone carrier delivers your message without errors or problems.
Recommendation	- Avoid using any characters one does not find on a standard keyboard - Avoid copying text from a rich text environment such as word processing tools or Web pages - Avoid using characters such as "&" (ampersand) or "%"
Unintended Consequences	- Message not being delivered - Message content being converted into a series of unintelligible characters - Message being split into and sent as multiple smaller messages

2.3 Provide a phone number or an email address at the very beginning or very end of the message.

Purpose	This will enable your contacts to contact you if they have questions regarding the message or the delivery of the message.
Recommendation	This is very important for the very first message you send or any test messages you send. See the section "Everbridge Identifier" elsewhere in this document for how your recipients can identify your messages.
Unintended Consequences	- Contacts will not follow instructions in the message in a timely manner or at all - Contacts will not know who to contact if they have questions or information - Contacts will be less likely to read future messages

3. After You Send an SMS Message

3.1 Review your Everbridge broadcast reports.

Purpose	This will ensure you can assess the success of your goals for the notification and will help you understand any unexpected results of your broadcast.
Recommendation	• Review the number of messages sent to SMS contact paths to ensure this number matches expectations • Review the number of confirmations received from SMS contact paths • Identify the contacts who have not confirmed receipt of your message on any path and follow-up with these contacts
Unintended Consequences	• You will not know if any contact had problems receiving the message unless they contact your directly • You will not know who did not confirm receipt of the message and the reason for lack of a receipt • You will not know to adjust your test plan or to update your contact information

3.2 Update contact information in your Everbridge contact database.

Purpose	This will ensure you have the most current contact information for your contacts before you send the next message. An individual can change mobile phone providers and keep the same phone numbers; it may take several days for your contact to receive SMS messages from you after they change their provider.
Recommendation	• Remove the mobile phone number from the SMS contact path for contacts who are not able to receive SMS messages • Correct invalid mobile phone numbers • Select the correct country for SMS contact paths • Use the One Way SMS contact path for contacts who are not able to confirm receipt of your messages from their mobile device
Unintended Consequences	• You may continue sending messages to someone who is not part of your organization • You may continue sending messages to a minor • You may continue to fail to achieve your notification goals

3.3 Update and distribute your company policy on notifications sent via SMS.

Purpose	This will ensure you always provide the most current information to your contacts.
Recommendation	Use feedback from your contacts to update: • Information regarding carrier charges for messages received and messages sent • Information regarding the splitting of messages • Information for handling carrier text messaging charges
Unintended Consequences	• Contacts may block SMS messages from Short Codes or long numeric Sender IDs due to carrier charges • Contacts will not know to whom they can direct their questions regarding messages sent to their mobile devices • Contacts may not know your company may compensate for carrier charges

3.4 Update your testing procedures.

Purpose	This will ensure your Everbridge Organization Administrators will have current procedures based on lessons learned and contact feedback, and will ensure a successful future test.
Recommendation	• Inform your contacts of the results of a test to ensure compliance and support with future tests • Store the testing procedures in a shared location
Unintended Consequences	Test broadcasts will not reflect your current practices.