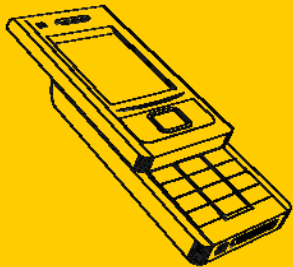


# AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA



## TEXT ALERT GUIDELINES

In partnership with:



Muintir na Tíre  
(Community Alert)



Neighbourhood Watch



Irish Farmers Association

An overview of Text Alert

**“Text Alert”** is designed to facilitate immediate and cost effective communication from An Garda Síochána to the public. This will be achieved in a structured and consistent way in conjunction with existing Community Crime Prevention Programmes (Community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch Group) or I.F.A. Branch etc.

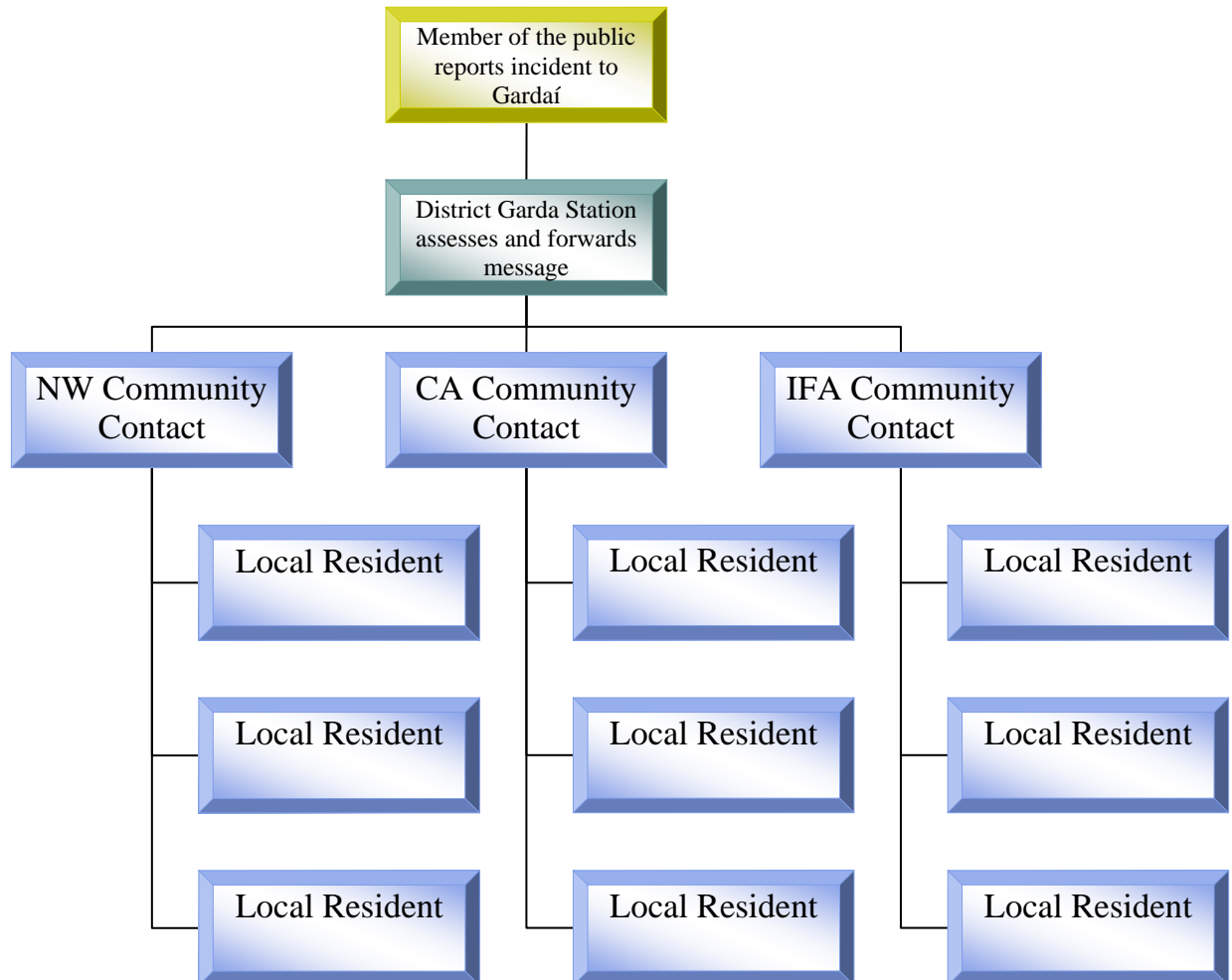
An Garda Síochána will provide information by text or e-mail to each registered “Community Contact” and they, in turn will forward the information by text or e-mail to all members of their “Community Group”.

“Text Alert” is a one way communications system. There will not be any facility to reply to the “Text Alert” system. Contact with the Gardaí must be made in person or by a telephone call, to control and verify information.

### **Text Alert in operation**

1. Member of the public reports incident to the Gardaí (24 hour Garda District -Telephone number will be widely advertised). The reporting Garda verifies details and determines that the “Text Alert” system should be utilised.
2. Garda sends text or e-mail out to each registered “Community Contact” in their Garda District.
3. Each “Community Contact” forwards the text to their “Community Group” to advice the public to watch out and report any developments. If the information is received by e-mail the Community Contact may forward the e-mail or convert the content to SMS Text and send to their Community Group.

## Structure of the community based 'Text Alert' service - Process Map



**\*NW (Neighbourhood Watch); CA (Community Alert); IFA (Irish Farmers Association).**

### The role of the community

Each community should determine if it requires a "Text Alert" system. Any community who wants to participate in "Text Alert" can then establish a Neighbourhood Watch or Community Alert group (see [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)), or join their local I.F.A. Branch. Technology is only one aspect of crime prevention and it is important that the "Text Alert" system is backed up by an organised and active community. The "Text Alert" system is designed to facilitate improved communication with Community Crime Prevention Programmes.

This Text Alert document was produced to assist local communities in establishing a standardised and efficient method of receiving communication by Text message or e-mail from An Garda Síochána. If a “Community Group” has decided to join a Garda District “Text Alert” scheme, then they are required to complete the attached “Text Alert Registration Form” (T.A.1) and forward it to their local Garda Superintendent for processing. An Garda Síochána will text or e-mail one “Community Contact” in each “Community Group”. The “Community Contact” will then forward the text/e-mail (or convert the contents of the Garda e-mail to SMS Text and forward) within their “Community Group”. The e-mail or telephone number provided by the “Community Contact” can be a mobile number or a server number. The adoption of a server number will facilitate an automated forwarding service.

If an automated forwarding service is contracted by a Community Group, it is a matter for the community group to ensure that the contracted service provider sends out “text alerts” in a timely manner to all group members.

There are a number of matters that each “Community Group” should consider:

1. Method\* of forwarding the received text from the Gardaí within the “Community Group”
2. Selecting a “Community Contact” to take overall responsibility for the “Text Alert” system within the “Community Group” including:
  - a. Collecting the mobile numbers for the “Community Group” and ensuring that they are updated
  - b. Contact within the Neighbourhood Watch or Community Alert group to co-ordinate crime prevention activity
3. Financing and advertising the existence of the “Text Alert” system within the “Community Group” area.

\*Each “Community Group” may decide on the method used to forward the text received from An Garda Síochána. This may include the use of a server and may also incorporate other communication mediums including the transfer of the original text as an email or phone call etc. This may be important to allow

a maximum reach within the community as mobile phone cover may be limited in some parts of the country.

## **The role of An Garda Síochána**

Every Community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch Group and I.F.A. Branch will register their “Community Contact” through their local Garda Station (Form T.A. 1). The “Community Contact” information will be sent to and verified by the District Garda Superintendent. The “Community Contact” will then receive texts / e-mail from the Garda District.

## **Types of Information for community circulation**

Texts / e-mails in relation to crime prevention advice / measures and important public information will be transmitted. Importantly, texts / e-mails will only go in one direction i.e. from the Gardaí to each “Community Contact”.

Any Garda receiving information should always consider if the “Text Alert” system is appropriate as a response. If considered appropriate then contact should be made with the District Garda Station and the Member In-Charge will arrange for an appropriate text / e-mail to be forwarded to each “Community Contact”. There are circumstances in which it will not be appropriate to send a message – nature of the crime, investigation concerns, time of night etc.

## Text Alert – Operation

To **SEND** a text / e-mail:

1. All messages (text / e-mail) should be sent using a SMS message format as outlined. If an e-mail is used this will facilitate the easy conversion of e-mail format to SMS message format.
2. Open a New Text / e-mail message. The recipient should be the community contact assigned by the community Text Alert Group.
3. Begin all messages by typing the relevant List Name.

District	List Name
Clonmel District	<b>warnclonmel</b>
Kanturk District	<b>warnkanturk</b>

4. Leave one space after the list name and begin typing the message. A total of 160 characters is allowable for the message. The characters used in the List Name are excluded from this allowance. Please use common abbreviations where possible (Appendix A). Each Community Contact and Community Group members will also receive this appendix.
5. Each text / e-mail will be reviewed before it is sent.

The following examples are provided as a guide to create a text.

### Example 1 – Suspicious Activity

*warnclonmel There have been reports of a car acting suspiciously in the Clonmel area KLO Blue Opel Astra 04WX\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (the full vehicle registration number should not be included).*

### **Example 2 – Keep a Look Out**

*warnwexford 2 distraction burglaries occurred in the last hour in south wexford. Silver ford mondeo car seen acting suspiciously nearby*

### **Example 3 - Information**

*warnennis District CA mtg at Town Hall 7pm on Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2013*

### **Example 4 – Crime Prevention Advice**

*warndundalk summer hols are near. Make plans with trusted neighbour to mind your home – papers, milk, curtains, alarm etc.*

Garda Districts with longer names may decide to use an abbreviation. This should be communicated to Garda Community Relations Bureau, Garda Headquarters, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2, in advance.

## **Garda District Information and System Data Management**

Each Garda District will maintain a log of registered Community Groups with their respective Community Contact. This information will be obtained from the submitted “Text Alert Registration Form” (**T.A.1**) submitted by the applying Community Group.

The contact number / e-mail address of each Community Contact will be entered into a Text Alert Group on the mobile phone used / e-mail address book at the Garda District Station. The Text Alert system will only be used to forward a text to a group that is registered.

All texts sent will be recorded on a “Text Alert Log” (**T.A. 2**) to create an audit trail.

Consideration should be given to including the community contact details from adjoining Garda Districts on each Garda District phone / e-mail address book assigned to the Text Alert scheme. This would facilitate the rapid spread of

information in relation to priority issues (e.g. distraction burglaries where criminals tend to change locations quickly).

### **Essential Garda Contact Details**

Garda Emergency Number	999 or 112
Garda Website	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Garda Confidential Telephone Number	1800 666 111
Crime Victims Helpline	116 006
Crimestoppers Freephone	1800 250 025





T.A. 1.

## “Text Alert” Registration Form

Superintendent,  
\_\_\_\_\_.

We wish to make application to join the \_\_\_\_\_ Garda District  
“Text Alert” scheme.

<b>Name of “Community Group”</b>	
<b>Name of “Community Contact”</b>	
<b>Mobile Number/Email of Community Contact</b>	

We agree that the text/email received from An Garda Síochána:

- will not be altered in any way
- will only be forwarded within the registered “Community Group”
- will be distributed within the “Community Group” at our own expense

The mobile telephone number/email address of the “Community Contact” will be the number utilised by the Gardaí to forward each text/email. If a server is being utilised then the appropriate contact number/email address of that server should be provided.

Forwarded for consideration, please.

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ . (C.A. – N.W. – I.F.A. Group)



T.A. 2.

## "Text Alert Log"

Date	Time	Text Incident	Text Sender

## **“Appendix A” Text Alert Terminology**

<b>4</b>	the number 4 or the word ‘for’
<b>2</b>	the number 2 or the word ‘to’
<b>2day</b>	today
<b>2moro</b>	tomorrow
<b>add</b>	address
<b>aka</b>	also known as
<b>asap</b>	as soon as possible
<b>b</b>	be
<b>b4</b>	before
<b>btwn</b>	between
<b>btw</b>	by the way
<b>c</b>	see
<b>eta</b>	estimated time of arrival
<b>etd</b>	estimated time of departure
<b>every1</b>	everyone
<b>fwd</b>	forward
<b>fyi</b>	for your information
<b>info</b>	information
<b>klo</b>	Keep a lookout
<b>msg</b>	message
<b>mtg</b>	meeting
<b>mth</b>	month
<b>pls</b>	please
<b>ppl</b>	people
<b>r</b>	are
<b>rgds</b>	regards
<b>sl</b>	something like
<b>sum1</b>	someone
<b>tel</b>	telephone
<b>thr4</b>	therefore
<b>u</b>	you
<b>ur</b>	your
<b>w/o</b>	without
<b>wknd</b>	weekend