



# Calvert County NEWS

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **National Wireless Emergency Alert System Debuts** *Weather Warnings, Other Alerts to be Sent to Mobile Phones Beginning This Month*

**PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – June 25, 2012** – The Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the wireless industry are introducing a new nationwide system this month that sends emergency notices to mobile devices.

The Wireless Emergency Alerts, or WEAs, will include extreme weather warnings from the National Weather Service, AMBER alerts and Presidential Alerts during a national emergency. For local emergencies, alerts will automatically go directly to all compatible mobile devices that are in Calvert County at the time of the alert, regardless of where the device is registered. There is no cost for the service, no need to sign up and messages do not count against a user's text messaging limit.

While WEAs are expected to begin this month, many mobile devices, especially older ones, are not WEA-capable. For information about which mobile devices can receive WEAs, visit <http://www.ctia.org/wea> or contact your wireless carrier. Residents who do not have compatible mobile devices will still be able to receive alerts through CodeRED, radio, media, the Emergency Alert System, TV broadcasts and other methods.

A WEA message can include only 90 characters in a text message format. The warnings are meant to heighten awareness and encourage residents to monitor the media for further information. Residents will not have to purchase any applications or software to receive the messages.

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When the messages are received, mobile devices will emit a special tone and vibration twice.

The system is similar to Calvert County's CodeRED system, which sends emergency notification emails, text messages and telephone calls to local residents and businesses. CodeRED is not limited by the number of characters and can send detailed information to users. To register for the free CodeRED emergency notification system or to update contact information with text message and/or email addresses, go to [www.co.cal.md.us](http://www.co.cal.md.us), and click on the CodeRED Emergency Notification System link.

To learn more, a general information page and a list of FAQs are available at <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/WEA/WEA.php>.

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*Calvert County is Maryland's smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to over 92,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, energy, advanced manufacturing and administrative services.*