

# The National Aquarium

**Location:** Baltimore, Maryland  
**Visitors:** 1.5 million annually  
**Employees:** 336  
**Volunteers:** 500

The National Aquarium, a leading nonprofit institution dedicated to ocean conservation, has been a fixture of Baltimore's Inner Harbor since 1981. Welcoming 1.5 million visitors each year, the Aquarium showcases over 17,000 specimens representing over 750 species, consistently earning its reputation as one of the nation's top aquariums.

We spoke with Rebecca Jancius, Safety and Risk Manager, who helped implement the Alertus System around 2020, to understand how the National Aquarium leverages the technology.



## Challenge

Operating an older facility holding over 2 million gallons of water and diverse exhibits presents unique challenges. The widespread presence of sea salt and concrete complicates the maintenance of electronic systems. Before implementing Alertus, the primary method of staff communication was through two-way radios. While effective, the Aquarium recognized the need for a more comprehensive system that could reach all staff members at any time, as well as communicate with visitors.

## Solution

When looking for a mass notification system (MNS), the National Aquarium selected Alertus, recognizing its ability to meet their specific needs. They utilize AlertAware® Mobile and have an Alert Beacon® in their control center, which has a preprogrammed, one-touch activation button for active shooter scenarios.

“With Alertus, we can communicate with every single partner, volunteer, and staff member, whether they are on site or

not, as we have three separate locations in which large volumes of staff and volunteers move between them,” said Jancius. “The ability to reach everyone or specific buildings allows us to effectively maneuver groups appropriately based on the situation.”

The National Aquarium also collaborates with the Baltimore City Fire and Police Departments. In emergencies, these agencies can use AlertAware to send messages directly to Aquarium staff.

Recently, the Aquarium added a poll function to their MNS. This feature enables them to quickly create and distribute polls based on the situation. For instance, during an active shooter event, they can use AlertAware to poll staff for their status. “The



*The wall-mounted Alertus Alert Beacon® sounds, flashes, and displays an alert message in the event of an emergency*

poll function is a game changer for us, especially with the number of people coming and going from our facilities daily. Being able to take the poll and engage with staff and volunteers quickly has been amazing,” said Jancius. “It’s a great concept, and I am so glad to have it.”

### Alertus Support

The National Aquarium and Alertus have developed a strong relationship built on the system’s reliability and the exceptional support provided.

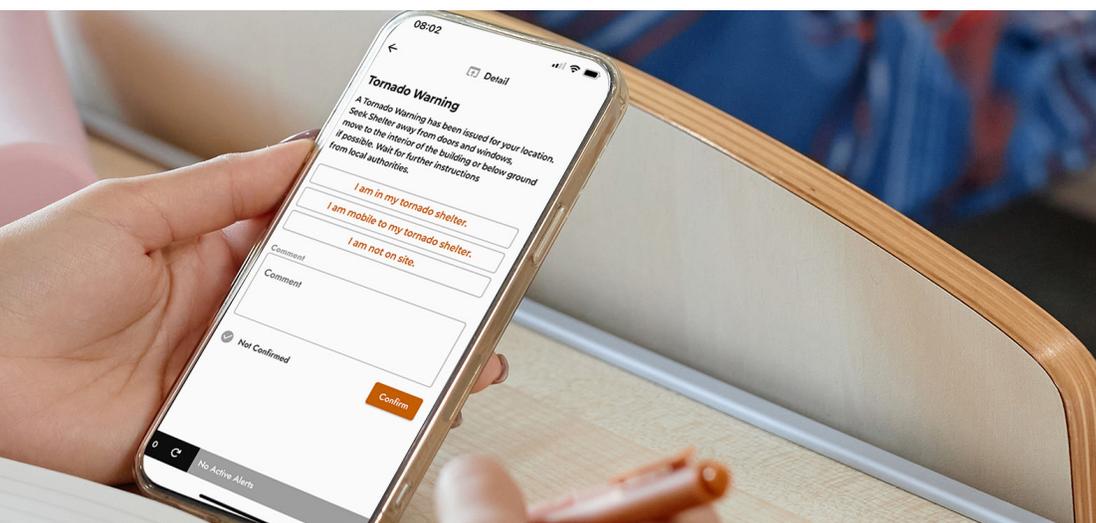
“The Alertus support team is extremely helpful and kind, whether it has been training our staff, answering questions, or fixing things on the backend, I can always get a hold of someone quickly,” said Jancius. “Alertus’ IT Department is also phenomenal – we receive timely notifications if anything goes offline, and they make sure we understand what is occurring and when things are resolved.”

### The Alertus System in Action

Following a parking garage collapse near the Aquarium, the staff used Alertus to provide regular updates to both staff and visitors, keeping them informed about the situation and when it was safe to return to the garage. “Being able to distribute multiple notifications quickly has been very helpful,” she said.

### The Critical Need for Mass Notification

Jancius strongly recommends an MNS to other organizations. “Go for it, because failures occur during emergencies due to a lack of communication. With Alertus, we can get the word out fast to people and have them follow step-by-step instructions when it’s needed. In a crisis, communication is key.”



*AlertAware is the leading modernized emergency management with geo-targeted notification and personnel accountability to enhance personal safety.*