

## How does public warning work in our country?

In Slovakia, according to the Ministry of Interior, a similar situation could not happen. There is no warning system that works on the principle of sending text messages; at least, not the same one as in the US.

However, indeed, there could be a great hubbub caused by sounding sirens; therefore, the warning system is adequately safeguarded by a series of different steps the operators have to make.

This means that it is not just about pushing a single button.

Imagine I want to activate a particular siren, and, for example, sound a two-minute fluctuating alarm tone, which is set for the warning purposes. Even if I choose to sound the alarm and confirm the action, and even if I choose a communications system (we have two methods of communications: a telemetric or RDS system), there will always be the last question whether or not I am absolutely sure. That is exactly to prevent anything like in Hawaii from happening in Slovakia.

Today, the Ministry of Interior let us visit their warning and notification centre, which is the hub of the whole national alert system. 24 hours a day, peace and security of citizens in Slovakia and abroad is monitored, or weather trends, so that the authorities can duly warn the citizens against torrential rains, floods or other natural disasters.

The Civil Protection Information System of the Ministry of Interior is connected to 8 alert centres in each region, from which all important information is sent out directly to the mayors of cities and municipalities.

As a rule, the sirens are activated from these municipal or local centres; yet, in emergency situations, every siren in Slovakia can be activated also from the national centre.

Sirens serve as warning devices to awaken people and to make them realise something is happening. They do not provide any detailed information; still, it is possible to add announcements, but they will not be perfectly intelligible. Further information is usually given through the public media and then, of course, through the Ministry's website or Facebook.

Well, some municipalities have their own warning systems for safety reasons, such as Jaslovske Bohunice with its nuclear power plant and Mala Ida with the nearby ironworks.

Modern technology is widely applied there.

Today, the inhabitants of towns and villages are no longer informed only via local web pages or PA systems, but also via the so-called text message warning service, meaning that they receive the information through official channels, from a town council or local authority office if such an event is happening or being prepared.

The Slovak Ministry of Interior is considering the possibility of the introduction of such text message warning service to be used in critical situations in the future. Nevertheless, now people are alerted to potential dangers by sirens.

Details are provided by public address systems of media.