

AJIS® TIP #1

Use AJIS For Continuity Of Operations Planning (COOP) Emergency Employee Notifications

The events of 9/11 and the federal focus on Homeland Security have brought to the forefront the importance of Court Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP). In the event of a federal emergency or any unforeseen court closure due to weather, natural disaster, or threat, it is important to communicate with your employees quickly and effectively with precise information. Two essentials listed in the July 2002 issue of *The Third Branch* article “10 Essentials for a Court COOP”¹ are:

- **Develop a system of warning employees, visitors, and the public of potential threats and what to do in an emergency.**
- **Develop ways to communicate with employees, visitors, and the public after an emergency.**

The AJIS Jury System offers tremendous flexibility for sending outbound phone calls to jurors, and with no system changes your court can readily use AJIS to send emergency notifications to employees as well. This document explains how to setup AJIS with the pertinent employee information, as well as suggestions for its planning and use in the event of such an emergency.

How do you setup AJIS to call employees?

AJIS typically draws its jurors from a separate host jury management system and groups those jurors by pool; however, you are not limited to adding only *jurors* to AJIS. Using the AJIS Desktop program you can add individuals (such as court employees) directly into AJIS in their own group (or pool) without interfering with other real jurors. Alternately, VoiceMetrix can provide your court a utility program to import employees directly from an ASCII computer file in any one of a variety of formats.

A. Preparing Your Employee Data

The only information AJIS needs to place emergency employee phone calls is an employee’s **name**, a **phone number**, a fictitious **pool number**, and a unique **identification number**. Whether you type this information directly in through the AJIS Desktop program or use the ASCII import utility, the following guidelines are the same:

1. AJIS requires that every individual in the AJIS system have a unique ID number (no two individuals in AJIS can share the same number). For simplicity we suggest you use *the last nine digits of the employee’s work phone number* as an ID (their work number without the first digit of the area code). You can use any other numbering scheme you choose as long as each employee has a unique number, and it does not exist as an existing juror number. It does not matter what this number is, and employees do not need to know it. AJIS simply uses this number to distinguish one individual from another in the system. (We urge you not to use employee social security number, as this should remain confidential.)

¹“10 Essentials for Court COOP,” *The Third Branch* 34 (July 2002) 9 March 2004, <http://www.uscourts.gov/ttb/july02ttb/essentials.html>

2. You can make up any pool number you like (unless already in use by a real pool). For JMS courts, we require a 9-digit number where the first 3 digits are a legitimate JMS location code (the same as JMS pool numbering). The remaining six digits should be values JMS is unlikely to ever contain such as '999999'. (A typical employee pool number might be '101999999'.)
3. Each employee record can only have one phone number. To call an employee at more than one phone number, enter the employee twice (or more) with different ID numbers and a different phone number in each record. AJIS will then call all of the phone numbers.
4. Employees added to AJIS by direct entry or ASCII import remain in AJIS until you use the AJIS Desktop program to delete them.
5. Devise a plan to keep the employee data in AJIS current. For ASCII import we suggest that at scheduled intervals you delete all employees from AJIS and import an updated file.
6. Your jury office personnel, who have been trained in AJIS and use it regularly, are the best personnel to administer emergency calls. If this responsibility is delegated to another person or department, please make sure they are thoroughly trained by your jury staff on how to setup, record, and launch AJIS Outbound Reminder Calls.
7. If persons other than the jury office are tasked with setup, recording, and launching of emergency outbound calls, you can restrict access by those users to employee pools only. (See the AJIS 3.6 Users Guide or Appendix C for more information on restricting pool access.)
8. Access to other AJIS features **MUST** be configured by the System Administrator. See the AJIS 3.5 Administration Guide or Appendix C for more information on configuring user features.)
9. In the event of an emergency, the person launching the employee calls should confer with jury office staff if possible to check for other scheduled outbound calls to regular jurors. This will not prevent employee calls, but it may slow them down as AJIS rotates between outbound juror calls and employee calls.
10. AJIS does not allow for prioritization of calls. Employees are called in no specific order. The system makes up to three attempts timed no closer than 30 minutes apart.
11. The outbound call time limits in the Data Settings screen (**Administration → Data Settings**) may require changing if calls are scheduled to launch before or after the time limits currently set.

B. Entering Employees using the AJIS Desktop Program

1. In the AJIS 3.6 Users Guide (Section 10.0, Maintaining Jurors Using the AJIS® Desktop) follow the instructions for adding jurors. (Section 9.0 in the AJIS 3.5 Users Guide)
2. When opened, the **Add Juror** screen will contain a default **Pool No.** You can change this number to the fictitious pool number you have designated for employees (such as '101999999').
3. Depending on your host jury system, the screen may require you to enter a sequence number. You may enter any 6-digit sequence number. Sequence numbers do not have to be unique; you can enter the same sequence number for every employee if need be.

C. Entering Employees using the ASCII Import Program

Upon request VoiceMetrix will provide your court with a file import utility program and guide you in preparation of that file. Detailed instructions for the file format are included with the program.