

FEMA, FCC, VITEMA Plan U.S. Virgin Islands Emergency Alert Test for Oct. 4

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Test messages will be sent to TVs, radios and cell phones

U.S. Virgin Islands -- FEMA, in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency will conduct a test in the U.S. Virgin Islands of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on Oct. 4.

The test in the territory and across the United States will consist of two portions, testing WEA and EAS capabilities. Both tests are scheduled to begin at about 2:20 p.m. ET on Wednesday.

The WEA portion of the test will be directed to all consumer cell phones. The test message will display in either English or in Spanish, depending on the language settings of the wireless handset.

The EAS portion of the test will be sent to radios and televisions.

FEMA, the FCC and VITEMA are coordinating with EAS participants, wireless providers, emergency managers and other stakeholders in preparation for this test to minimize confusion and to maximize the public safety value of the test.

The purpose of the Oct. 4 test is to ensure the systems continue to be effective means of warning the public about emergencies, particularly those on the national level. In case the Oct. 4 test is postponed due to widespread severe weather or other significant events, the backup testing date is Oct. 11.

The WEA portion of the test will be initiated using FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), a centralized internet-based system administered by FEMA that enables authorities to send authenticated emergency messages to the public through multiple communications networks. The WEA test will be administered via a code sent to cell phones.



This year the EAS message will be disseminated as a Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) message via the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System-Open Platform for Emergency Networks (IPAWS-OPEN).

All wireless phones should receive the message only once. The following can be expected from the nationwide WEA test:

- Beginning at about 2:20 p.m. ET, cell towers will broadcast the test for about 30 minutes. During this time, WEA-compatible wireless phones that are switched on, within range of an active cell tower, and whose wireless provider participates in WEA, should be capable of receiving the test message.
- For consumers, the message that appears on their phones will read: “THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.”
- Phones with the main menu set to Spanish will display: “ESTA ES UNA PRUEBA del Sistema Nacional de Alerta de Emergencia. No se necesita acción.”

WEA alerts are created and sent in the territory by VITEMA through IPAWS to participating wireless providers, which deliver the alerts to compatible handsets in geo-targeted areas. To help ensure these alerts are accessible to the entire public, including people with disabilities, the alerts are accompanied by a unique tone and vibration.

Important information about the EAS test:

- The EAS portion of the test is scheduled to last about one minute and will be conducted with the participation of radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, satellite radio and television providers and wireline video providers.
- The test message will be similar to the regular monthly EAS test messages with which the public is familiar. It will state: “This is a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System, issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, covering the United States from 14:20 to 14:50 hours ET. This is only a test. No action is required by the public.

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