TIP #1: Tests of the Emergency Alert System & Wireless Emergency Alerts

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandates testing of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to ensure broadcaster readiness to deliver alerts. Alerting Authorities (AAs) may also perform EAS and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) testing as summarized here.

Emergency Alert System Tests

EAS participants (radio and TV stations and cable TV) receive Required Weekly Tests (RWTs) from IPAWS as "log only" messages. EAS devices in these facilities will receive and log the RWT, but participants are not required to forward RWTs to their broadcast audiences and cable subscribers.

Alerting Authorities also may originate RWTs through IPAWS for EAS distribution, to ensure that their alerting software can send a message to the public through radio and TV. After issuing a RWT, contact a local radio, TV station or cable system operator and ask them to check their EAS log to see if the RWT is listed as received.

This is also an opportunity to develop a relationship with your local media outlets. Your State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) will be familiar with EAS participants and procedures in your area.

EAS participants also perform Required Monthly Tests (RMT). They must forward RMTs to their listeners and viewers according to a schedule established by each SECC. The RMT event code is not for use by AAs.

Wireless Emergency Alert Tests

The FCC has authorized AAs to send LIVE tests of WEA using the RWT event code **only.** Test messages using RWT will **not display on a mobile phone** unless the user has opted-in the phone to receive WEA tests.

Mobile phones ship from the factory with WEA tests opted-out. Opting into tests in the phone settings has no effect on receipt of actual WEA emergency alerts.

WEA test messages must state that the alert is a TEST. AAs may use the RWT event code to test WEA, but **are not required** to perform live WEA tests on a weekly basis. It is an FCC rule violation to test WEA using codes other than RWT, without prior FCC approval. A change to this rule is pending as of the date of this Tip.

Contact Us

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