



PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU ANNOUNCES NATIONWIDE TEST OF THE EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

PS Docket No. 15-94

Today, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) provides notice to all Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participants that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in collaboration with the FCC, will conduct a nationwide test of the EAS.¹ The primary test date is scheduled for September 28, 2016, at 2:20 PM EDT. The secondary test date is scheduled for October 5, 2016, if necessary. EAS Participants must be prepared to participate in a test on both the primary and alternate test dates. All EAS Participants are required to participate in this nationwide test.²

The nationwide test will assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS, with a particular emphasis on testing FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), the integrated gateway through which common alerting protocol-based (CAP-based) EAS alerts are disseminated to EAS Participants. The test message will clearly state that the alert is only a test of the EAS. FEMA's alert will be transmitted in English and Spanish and include both audio and the text of the test message, which can be used to populate an accessible video crawl. These improvements will help ensure that all members of the public, including non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, will receive emergency information. The test will provide an opportunity to evaluate this and other measures that the FCC has adopted to address issues identified in connection with the 2011 Nationwide EAS Test.³

The results of the nationwide EAS test will be captured and analyzed using the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS).⁴ All EAS Participants are reminded that they are required to register with

¹ This *Public Notice* satisfies the requirement that the Commission provide notice to EAS Participants at least two months prior to the conduct of a national test. *See* 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iii).

² 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i).

³ *See* Federal Communications Commission Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Strengthening the Emergency Alert System (EAS): Lessons Learned from the First Nationwide EAS Test (2013), http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2013/db0412/DOC-320152A1.pdf.

⁴ *See* Federal Communications Commission, EAS Test Reporting System, <https://www.fcc.gov/general/eas-test-reporting-system>.

ETRS and must complete the filing of ETRS Form One on or before August 26, 2016.⁵ EAS Participants shall file the “day of test” information sought by ETRS Form Two at or before 11:59 PM EDT on September 28, 2016.⁶ EAS Participants shall file the detailed post-test data sought by ETRS Form Three on or before November 14, 2016.⁷

The Bureau encourages EAS Participants to take steps, in coordination with their State Emergency Coordination Councils, in preparation for this test, such as:

- Reviewing and, if necessary, updating state EAS plans;
- Ensuring that a copy of the EAS Operating Handbook is located at normal duty positions or EAS equipment locations and is immediately available to operators;⁸
- Reviewing the EAS Operating Handbook for the actions to be taken by operators upon receipt of the test alert and tailoring any actions as necessary that are specific to the EAS Participants’ facilities;
- Ensuring that EAS equipment operates in compliance with the Commission rules, such as being capable of receiving and processing the national periodic test code⁹ and the “six zeroes” national location code;¹⁰
- Upgrading EAS equipment software and firmware to the most recent version;
- Updating ETRS Form One filings to reflect changes to identifying information;
- Manually synchronizing EAS equipment clocks to the official time provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology,¹¹ if an EAS Participant’s equipment does not automatically synchronize to an Internet time source.

Members of the public and interested stakeholder organizations that are in position to observe test results in their communities can provide useful feedback on the improvements to the EAS, any problems observed, or any other complications in the delivery of the EAS message during the nationwide test by reporting their observations to the Public Safety Support Center at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/public-safety-support-center>.

⁵ *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Launches EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) and Seeks Comment on EAS Operating Handbook Recommendations*, Public Notice, PS Docket No. 15-94, DA 16-721 at 2 (PSHSB June 27, 2016). EAS Participants have until September 26, 2016 to update information or correct any errors in their initial Form One filings. *Id.*

⁶ EAS Participants are required to file “day of test” data within 24 hours of any nationwide EAS test or as otherwise required by the Bureau. 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(B).

⁷ EAS Participants are required to file detailed post-test data within 45 days following a nationwide EAS test. 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(C).

⁸ *See* 47 CFR § 11.15.

⁹ *See* 47 CFR § 11.52(e).

¹⁰ *See* 47 CFR § 11.31(f).

¹¹ National Institute of Standards and Technology, The Official NIST US Time, <http://www.time.gov>.

For further information regarding the nationwide EAS test, contact Austin Randazzo, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-1462 or austin.randazzo@fcc.gov, or Gregory Cooke, Deputy Chief, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-2351 or gregory.cooke@fcc.gov.

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