

APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE
DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
June 23, 2015

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

TO THE

FCC DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JUNE 23, 2015

The FCC's new Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)'s Emergency Communications Subcommittee established working groups to consider certain priorities, one of which is Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). That DAC WEA Working Group unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing in its entirety the recommendations set forth in the Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC) October 2014 Geographic Targeting, Message Content, and Character Limitation Subgroup Report (WEA Report). The full DAC Emergency Communications Subcommittee then adopted the resolution to endorse this CSRIC WEA Report. Now the DAC Emergency Communications Subcommittee asks that the full DAC endorse this CSRIC WEA Report at the June 23rd meeting.

To provide some background:

The CSRIC working group was established to make recommendations to the FCC on improving the WEA functionalities and submitted its WEA report recommending an increase in the number of characters up to 280 that will allow the WEA to include graphical information, and to conduct studies to determine how to improve geo-targeting technology and solution, as well as other critical improvements.

The Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) can be considered more advanced with its features than the Emergency Alert Broadcasts (EAS). WEAs are delivered to wireless mobile devices, such as cell phones, and can include National Weather Alerts, Amber Alerts, EAS messages or Presidential Messages. Wireless alerts also can be geographically targeted. The WEA audible alert tone is unique so that users of the device are immediately notified of the urgency of the messages delivered. WEAs also set off a distinct vibration to alert people who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard-of-hearing. From inception, and based on technology at the time, WEAs have been limited to 90 characters, including spaces. This has been proven to be too cursory for key information to be included in the WEAs. Representatives in the public safety sector and the general public have expressed a need to increase the character limitation. For instance, an increase in the WEA character limit would enable the inclusion of URLs and web links in WEA messages to assist the public in obtaining additional information about the particular emergency at hand. As technology has evolved, it is now possible and appropriate to extend that 90 character limit.

In closing, we ask that the full DAC endorse this CSRIC WEA Report at the June 23rd meeting.

Toni Dunne

Cheryl King

Richard Ray

Suzy Rosen Singleton