

PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU ANNOUNCES NATIONWIDE TEST OF THE WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERT AND EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEMS ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94

Today, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) provides notice to all Participating Commercial Mobile Service (CMS) Providers,¹ Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participants,² and to the public that, as described below, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the FCC, will conduct a nationwide combined test of the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) and EAS on September 20, 2018, with a back-up date of October 3, 2018.³

I. NATIONWIDE WEA AND EAS TEST

At 2:18 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), FEMA will send a WEA test message to WEA-capable wireless devices throughout the entire United States and territories.⁴ All wireless providers that have elected to participate in WEA are required to participate in this nationwide test.⁵ The WEA test message will state: “THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.”

¹ Participating CMS Providers are commercial mobile service providers that have elected voluntarily to transmit WEA alert messages. 47 CFR § 10.10(d), (f).

² EAS Participants are those entities that are required to comply with the Commission’s EAS rules, including analog radio and television stations, wired and wireless cable television systems, digital broadcast systems, digital television broadcast stations, Satellite Digital Audio Radio Service, digital cable and digital audio broadcasting systems, and wireline video systems. 47 CFR § 11.2(d).

³ See Letter from Alfred Kenyon, Chief, Customer Support Branch, IPAWS Program Office, National Continuity Programs Department of Homeland Security - FEMA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission (filed July 10, 2018) (on file in PS Docket No. 15-91 *et al.*) (FEMA Letter).

⁴ Today the Bureau also released an *Order* granting a limited waiver of the Commission’s WEA rules to require Participating CMS Providers to participate in this combined test. *Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting; Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission’s Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket Nos. 15-91 and 15-94, Order, DA 18-752 (PSHSB July 20, 2018), <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-grants-waiver-allow-wireless-emergency-alert-test>.

⁵ FEMA indicates that the test will use the Presidential Alert classification. FEMA Letter at 1. Participating CMS Providers are required to receive and transmit any WEA messages using the Presidential Alert classification. See 47 CFR § 10.400.

Immediately following the WEA nationwide end-to-end test, at 2:20 p.m. EDT, FEMA will conduct a live test of the EAS. All EAS Participants are required to participate in this nationwide test.⁶ The following EAS message will be disseminated *via* the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS):

THIS IS A TEST of the National Emergency Alert System. This system was developed by broadcast and cable operators in voluntary cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, and local authorities to keep you informed in the event of an emergency. If this had been an actual emergency an official message would have followed the tone alert you heard at the start of this message. A similar wireless emergency alert test message has been sent to all cell phones in the nation. Some cell phones will receive the message. Others will not. No action is required.⁷

The EAS 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.

EAS Participants are reminded that they are required to register with the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) and must complete the filing of ETRS Form One on or before August 27, 2018.⁸ On or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, September 20, 2018, EAS Participants must file the “day of test” information sought by ETRS Form Two.⁹ On or before November 5, 2018, EAS Participants must file the detailed post-test data sought by ETRS Form Three.¹⁰ Filers can access ETRS by visiting the ETRS page of the Commission’s website at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/eas-test-reporting-system>. Instructional videos regarding registration and completion of the ETRS Forms are available on the ETRS page.

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

- ensuring that a copy of the EAS Operating Handbook is located at normal duty positions, or EAS equipment locations, and is otherwise immediately available to operators;¹¹
- 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;

⁶ 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ See *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Opens the EAS Test Reporting System for 2018 Filings*, Public Notice, PS Docket No. 15-94, DA 18-708 (PSHSB 2018). Pursuant to Section 11.61 of the Commission’s rules, EAS Participants must renew their identifying information required by ETRS Form One on a yearly basis. See 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(A). EAS Participants must file any corrections to Form One no later than September 26, 2018. See *Review of the Emergency Alert System et al.*, EB Docket No. 04-296, Sixth Report and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 6520, 6532, 6533, para. 27 (2015) (*Sixth Report and Order*) (EAS Participants are allowed thirty days after submission of all ETRS forms to review their filings and to correct errors).

⁹ See 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(B) (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).

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ See 47 CFR § 11.15. A writable PDF version of the EAS Operating Handbook can be found on the Bureau’s web site at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/eas-test-reporting-system>.

- ensuring that EAS equipment can receive and process the national periodic test code,¹² the “six zeroes” national location code, and otherwise operate in compliance with the Commission rules;¹³
- upgrading EAS equipment software and firmware to the most recent version;
- reviewing their 2017 ETRS Form One filings to identify and make necessary updates to the information previously provided; and
- manually synchronizing EAS equipment clocks to the official time provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology,¹⁴ if an EAS Participant’s equipment does not automatically synchronize to an Internet time source.

We invite members of the public and interested stakeholder organizations that are in a position to observe test results in their communities to provide feedback on the test, including any problems observed or any other complications in the delivery of the WEA or EAS test 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>.

II. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the nationwide test, contact Gregory Cooke, Deputy Chief, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-2351 or gregory.cooke@fcc.gov, or Linda Pinto, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-7490 or linda.pinto@fcc.gov.

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¹² See 47 CFR § 11.52(e).

¹³ See 47 CFR § 11.31(f).

¹⁴ National Institute of Standards and Technology, The Official NIST US Time, <http://www.time.gov>.