

# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> 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 EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM ON AUGUST 7, 2019 AND OPENS THE EAS TEST REPORTING SYSTEM FOR 2019 FILINGS**

### **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<sup>1</sup> and to the public that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the FCC, will conduct a nationwide test of the EAS on August 7, 2019, at 2:20 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), with a backup date of August 21, 2019.<sup>2</sup> The Bureau also provides notice that the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) is now open and accepting 2019 filings. All EAS Participants must renew their identifying information in ETRS Form One on or before July 3, 2019.

### **I. NATIONWIDE EAS TEST**

The primary test date is scheduled for Wednesday, August 7, 2019, at 2:20 p.m. EDT. If conditions on the day of the test require the rescheduling of the test, a secondary test date is scheduled for Wednesday, August 21, 2019. The test message will clearly state that the alert is only a test of the EAS. All EAS Participants are required to participate in this nationwide test.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike in recent years, the 2019 nationwide test will only be disseminated using a hierarchical, broadcast-based distribution system, otherwise known as the “daisy chain.”<sup>4</sup> Because the test will be

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<sup>1</sup> 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(b), 11.11(a).

<sup>2</sup> 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 May 22, 2019) (on file in PS Docket No. 15-94) (FEMA Letter of Intent). 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).

<sup>3</sup> 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i).

<sup>4</sup> See *Review of the Emergency Alert System*, EB Docket No. 04-296, Sixth Report and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 6520, 6522-23, paras. 4-6 (2015) (*Sixth Report and Order*) (describing EAS architecture). In past years, FEMA has distributed the nationwide EAS test through both the broadcast-based daisy chain as well as over the Internet using

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disseminated in this manner, FEMA indicates that “full message text and multilingual messaging will not be available.”<sup>5</sup> According to FEMA, “[t]he intent of conducting the test in this fashion is to determine the capability of the [EAS] to deliver messages to the public in the event that dissemination via internet is not available.”<sup>6</sup> Testing the daisy chain will allow the FCC and FEMA to assess whether the national EAS would perform as designed, if activated, and help to ensure the reliability and effectiveness of broadcast-based alerting as a failsafe to our national emergency communications infrastructure.

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;<sup>7</sup>
- 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;
- Reviewing their State EAS Plan for monitoring assignments, and ensuring that EAS equipment is accurately configured to monitor those sources;<sup>8</sup>
- Ensuring that EAS equipment can receive and process the NPT code,<sup>9</sup> the “six zeroes” national location code, and otherwise operate in compliance with the Commission rules;<sup>10</sup>
- Upgrading EAS equipment software and firmware to the most recent version;
- Manually synchronizing EAS equipment clocks to the official time provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology,<sup>11</sup> if an EAS Participant’s equipment does not automatically synchronize to an Internet time source; and
- Reviewing their 2018 ETRS Form One filings to identify and make necessary updates to the information previously provided (see below for more information on ETRS).

Members of the public and interested stakeholder organizations that are in a position to observe test results in their communities can provide useful feedback on the nationwide test, including any problems observed or any complications in the delivery of the EAS message during the nationwide test by

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the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The Commission’s rules require EAS Participants to be able to receive alerts from both IPAWS and the broadcast-based EAS structure. *See* 47 CFR §§ 11.51(d), 11.56(a).

<sup>5</sup> *See* FEMA Letter of Intent at 1. We note, however, that the alert must comply with the FCC’s accessibility requirements and, as such, will include both audio and visual elements as required by the Commission’s rules. *See* 47 CFR § 11.51(d), (g)(3), (h)(3), (j)(2).

<sup>6</sup> FEMA Letter of Intent at 1.

<sup>7</sup> *See* 47 CFR § 11.15. A writeable 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>.

<sup>8</sup> *See* 47 CFR § 11.52(d)(1) (with respect to EAS messages that are formatted in accordance with the EAS Protocol, EAS Participants must monitor two EAS sources).

<sup>9</sup> *See* 47 CFR § 11.52(e).

<sup>10</sup> *See* 47 CFR § 11.31(f).

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

reporting their observations to the Public Safety Support Center at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/public-safety-support-center>.

## II. EAS TEST REPORTING SYSTEM AND RELATED DEADLINES

The ETRS is now open for 2019 filings. 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.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, all EAS Participants must complete the 2019 ETRS Form One on or before July 3, 2019.<sup>13</sup> Each EAS Participant should file a separate copy of Form One for each of its EAS decoders, EAS encoders, or units combining such decoder and encoder functions. For example, if an individual is filing for a broadcaster (or cable headend) that uses two units combining decoder and encoder functions, that individual should file two copies of Form One.

On or before 11:59 p.m. EDT, August 7, 2019, EAS Participants must file "day of test" information sought by ETRS Form Two.<sup>14</sup> On or before September 23, 2019, EAS Participants must file the detailed post-test data sought by ETRS Form Three.<sup>15</sup> ETRS Forms Two and Three will become available in the ETRS at the time of initiation of the 2019 nationwide test.

Filers can access ETRS by visiting the ETRS page of the Commission's website at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/eas-test-reporting-system>.<sup>16</sup> Filers must use their registered FCC Username (Username) that is associated with the FCC Registration Numbers (FRNs) for which they will file. Filers that have already created a Username for use with another FCC system may access the ETRS with that Username. Filers that do not remember the password that corresponds with their Username may reset it at <https://apps2.fcc.gov/fccUserReg/pages/reset-passwd-identify.htm>. Filers that have not previously created a Username may do so by visiting the User Registration System at <https://apps2.fcc.gov/fccUserReg/pages/createAccount.htm>. Filers can associate their Username to an FRN by logging in at <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do> and clicking on the appropriate option. Additional information regarding creating and associating FRNs with a Username can be found on the CORES FAQs page at <https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/publicHome.do?faq=true>.

All EAS Participants – including Low Power FM stations (LPFM), Class D non-commercial educational FM stations, and EAS Participants that are silent pursuant to a grant of Special Temporary Authority – are required to register and file Form One in ETRS, with the following exceptions:

- Analog and digital low power television (LPTV) stations that operate as television broadcast translator stations are not required to register and file in ETRS.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(A).

<sup>13</sup> EAS Participants must file any corrections to Form One no later than August 5, 2019. *Sixth Report and Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6532-33, para. 27 (EAS Participants are allowed thirty days after submission of all ETRS forms to review their filings and to correct errors).

<sup>14</sup> 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).

<sup>15</sup> See 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(C) (EAS Participants are required to file detailed post-test data within 45 days following a nationwide EAS test).

<sup>16</sup> Instructional videos regarding registration and completion of the ETRS Form One are available on the ETRS website.

<sup>17</sup> See 47 CFR § 11.11(b).

- FM broadcast booster stations and FM translator stations which entirely rebroadcast the programming of other local FM broadcast stations are not required to register and file in ETRS.<sup>18</sup>
- Analog and digital broadcast stations that operate as satellites or repeaters of a hub station (or common studio or control point if there is no hub station) and rebroadcast 100 percent of the programming of the hub station (or common studio or control point) are not required to register and file in ETRS. However, the hub station (or common studio or control point) is required to register and file in ETRS.<sup>19</sup>

Filers can update previously filed forms in ETRS by clicking on the “My Filings” menu option and then clicking on the record for that form. Broadcasters can pre-populate Form One by completing the FRN and Facility ID fields. Cable systems can pre-populate Form One by completing the FRN and Physical System ID (PSID) fields. EAS Participants that pre-populate Form One using a Facility ID number or a PSID number are urged to review their pre-populated data to ensure accuracy.<sup>20</sup> EAS Participants are urged to review Form One as soon as possible to allow sufficient time for possible corrections. EAS Participants are allowed thirty days after submission (i.e., on or before August 5, 2019) to submit any updates or corrections to their 2019 Form One filings.

### III. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the nationwide EAS test, contact Elizabeth Cuttner, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-2145 or [elizabeth.cuttner@fcc.gov](mailto:elizabeth.cuttner@fcc.gov), or Maureen Bizhko, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-0011 or [maureen.bizhko@fcc.gov](mailto:maureen.bizhko@fcc.gov).

Filers may contact FCC Licensing Support for assistance with creating a Username or other CORES troubleshooting via the web at <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/available-support-services>, or by telephone at 1-877-480-3201. The support hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays). Filers may contact Bureau staff for assistance in completing ETRS Form One at [ETRS@fcc.gov](mailto:ETRS@fcc.gov).

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<sup>18</sup> See *id.*

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<sup>20</sup> Data fields that cannot be edited in ETRS are populated from the EAS Participant’s filings in the Commission’s Online Public Inspection File (OPIF), which is in turn populated from the Commission’s Consolidated Database System (CDBS). Accordingly, EAS Participants must ensure that their CDBS information is correct for it to appear accurately in ETRS.