

PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU REMINDS EAS PARTICIPANTS OF UPCOMING DATES AND DEADLINES FOR 2019 NATIONWIDE EAS TEST

PS Docket No. 15-94

The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) reminds all Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participants¹ and 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, with a back-up date of August 21, 2019.² The Bureau also reminds all EAS Participants to file Form Two in the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) at or before 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on August 7, 2019,³ and to file ETRS Form Three on or before September 23, 2019.⁴ Additional information, including instructional videos and answers to frequently asked questions about entering data into the ETRS forms, can be found at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/eas-test-reporting-system>.

At 2:20 p.m. EDT on August 7, 2019, FEMA will conduct a live test of the EAS. All EAS Participants are required to participate in this nationwide test.⁵ The EAS message will only be

¹ 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).

² *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*, Public Notice, PS Docket No. 15-94, DA 19-505 (PSHSB June 3, 2019) (*Test Announcement Public Notice*). In the event FEMA, in consultation with the National Weather Service, identifies severe weather conditions in some parts of the nation that may require activation of the EAS, the test will be rescheduled for the back-up date.

³ 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). EAS Participants have until July 3, 2019 to register and file ETRS Form One. 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. We are aware of some EAS Participants encountering filing issues in ETRS and encourage EAS Participants to confirm submission of ETRS Form One for 2019 through their "My Filings" page in ETRS.

⁴ 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).

⁵ 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i).

disseminated using a hierarchical, broadcast-based distribution system, otherwise known as the “daisy chain.”⁶ The test message will clearly state that the alert is only a test of the EAS.

This year’s over-the-air EAS test will only be transmitted in English and will not include full message text.⁷ EAS Participants are reminded, however, that EAS alerts are required to be accessible to the entire public, including people with disabilities.⁸ The visual message portion of an EAS alert, whether video crawl or block text, must be displayed: (1) at the top of the television screen or where it will not interfere with other visual messages; (2) in a manner (i.e., font size, color, contrast, location, and speed) that is readily readable and understandable, (3) in a manner that does not contain overlapping lines of EAS text or extend beyond the viewable display (except for video crawls that intentionally scroll on and off of the screen); and (4) in full at least once during any EAS message.⁹ EAS Participants are also reminded that the audio portion of an EAS message must play in full at least once during any EAS message.¹⁰ Each EAS Participant, whether broadcaster, cable provider or other, needs to ensure that its equipment—whether EAS equipment, character generator, or other—is prepared to deliver the alert in a manner consistent with these Commission rules.

EAS Participants are reminded to take steps, in coordination with their State Emergency Communication Committees, in preparation for this test. This preparation would include upgrading EAS equipment software and firmware to the most recent version and ensuring that EAS equipment can receive and process the National Periodic Test code, the “six zeroes” national location code, and otherwise operate in compliance with the Commission’s rules.¹¹ EAS Participants are also reminded to review their State EAS Plans for monitoring assignments and to ensure that EAS equipment is accurately configured to monitor those sources.¹²

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, or Maureen Bizhko, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-0011 or maureen.bizhko@fcc.gov.

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⁶ 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 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).

⁷ According to FEMA, “full message text and multilingual messaging will not be available due to the over-the-air message delivery and relay used in this system of EAS message dissemination.” 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, at 1 (filed May 22, 2019) (on file in PS Docket No. 15-94).

⁸ 47 CFR § 11.51(d), (g)(3)(h)(3), (j)(2).

⁹ 47 CFR § 11.51(d)(1), (g)(3)(i), (h)(3)(i), (j)(2)(i).

¹⁰ 47 CFR § 11.51(d)(2), (g)(3)(ii), (h)(3)(ii), (j)(2)(ii).

¹¹ See 47 CFR § 11.31(f).

¹² 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).