

PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU REMINDS EAS PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATING CMS PROVIDERS OF REQUIREMENT TO ISSUE ACCESSIBLE EAS AND WEA ALERTS

PS Docket Nos. 15-91 and 15-94

The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) reminds analog and digital television broadcast stations, analog and digital cable systems, wireless cable systems, wireline video systems, and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) providers¹ (collectively EAS Participants) of the requirement to provide accessible Emergency Alert System (EAS) alerts. PSHSB also reminds participating commercial mobile service providers (Participating CMS Providers)² and equipment manufacturers of accessibility requirements for Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the FCC, will conduct a nationwide test of the EAS and WEA on August 11, 2021, at 2:20 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), with a backup date of August 25, 2021.³ The 2021 nationwide EAS test will only be disseminated using the hierarchical, broadcast-based distribution “daisy chain” system.⁴ Additionally, FEMA will issue a nationwide WEA using the State/Local WEA category test code this year. This message will appear only on subscribers’ wireless handsets that have opted-in to receive WEA test messages.

EAS Accessibility. The EAS test message will be transmitted as follows:

“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. No action is required.”

¹See 47 CFR § 11.51 *passim*. Analog class D non-commercial educational FM stations as defined in §73.506 of the rules, digital class D non-commercial educational FM stations, analog Low Power FM (LPFM) stations as defined in §§73.811 and 73.853 of the rules, digital LPFM stations, analog low power TV (LPTV) stations as defined in §74.701(f) of the rules, and digital LPTV stations as defined in §74.701(k) of the rules are not required to have equipment capable of generating the EAS codes and Attention Signal specified in §11.31 of the rules.

² See 47 CFR § 10.10(d), (f). A Participating Commercial Mobile Service Provider (or a Participating CMS Provider) is a Commercial Mobile Service Provider that has voluntarily elected to transmit Alert Messages. *Id.* at 10.10(f).

³ *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Announces Nationwide Test of the Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alert System on August 11, 2021 and Opens the EAS Test Reporting System for Filings*, Public Notice, PS Dockets 15-91 and 15-94, DA 21-680, 2021 WL 2419820 (PSHSB June 11, 2021).

⁴ 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) (describing EAS architecture).

EAS Participants should take necessary steps, in compliance with section 11.51 of the Commission's rules,⁵ to ensure that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals who are blind or visually impaired have full access to EAS messages. Section 11.51 requires analog and digital television broadcast stations, analog and digital cable systems, wireless cable systems, wireline video systems, and DBS providers to broadcast national-level alerts in a manner that allows individuals with and without disabilities to access the full content.⁶

The EAS text must be displayed as follows:

- At the top of the television screen or where it will not interfere with other visual messages (e.g., closed captioning),
- In a manner (i.e., font size, color, contrast, location, and speed) that is readily readable and understandable,
- Without overlapping lines or extending beyond the viewable display (except for video crawls that intentionally scroll on and off of the screen), and
- In full at least once during any EAS message.⁷

The audio portion of an EAS message must be played in full at least once to ensure it is accessible to viewers who are blind or have low vision.⁸

WEA Accessibility. The WEA test message will appear only on subscribers' wireless handsets that have opted-in to receive WEA test messages. The WEA test message will read as follows:⁹

“THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.”

Participating CMS Providers and equipment manufacturers should take the necessary steps to ensure accessibility of WEA messages to individuals with disabilities, in compliance with sections 10.520 and 10.530 of the Commission's rules,¹⁰ by enabling their WEA-capable devices to include unique audio and vibration attention signals. Further, WEA messages should be preserved in a consumer-accessible format and location for at least 24 hours or until deleted by the subscriber.¹¹

⁵ 47 CFR § 11.51 *passim*.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Opt-in phones with the main menu set to Spanish will display: “ESTA ES UNA PRUEBA del Sistema Nacional de Alerta de Emergencia. No se necesita acción.”

¹⁰ 47 CFR §§ 10.520, 10.530.

¹¹ 47 CFR § 10.500(h).

Public Feedback. For accessibility questions regarding the emergency alerting tests, please contact the FCC by e-mail at dro@fcc.gov, 202-418-2517 (voice) or 844-432-2275 (videophone). To file an accessibility complaint regarding the EAS Test, please visit www.fcc.gov/accessibilitycomplaintsform. General feedback about the test should be directed to the FCC's Public Safety Support Center at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/public-safety-support-center> and submitted through the "Alerting Test Feedback" form.

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