



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 RELEASES ITS INITIAL FINDINGS REGARDING THE 2018 NATIONWIDE TESTS OF WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS AND THE EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94

This Public Notice provides an initial overview of the 2018 nationwide tests of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS) conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) on October 3, 2018. At 2:18 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on that day, FEMA sent a WEA test message to WEA-capable wireless devices throughout the entire United States and territories. Immediately following the WEA nationwide end-to-end test, at 2:20 p.m. EDT, FEMA conducted a live test of the EAS. The EAS alert was transmitted in English and Spanish and included both audio and the text of the test message, which can be used to populate an accessible video crawl. All Participating Commercial Mobile Service (CMS) Providers were required to participate in the WEA portion of the test,¹ while all EAS Participants were required to participate in the EAS portion of the test.²

I. KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM EAS TEST RESULTS

EAS Participants nationwide were required to submit identifying information in Form One of the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) on or prior to August 27, 2018. EAS Participants were required to submit Form Two “day of test” results that indicated whether they successfully received and retransmitted the test alert at or before 11:59 p.m. on October 3, 2018. EAS Participants were required to file ETRS Form Three, which specified how they received the alert and identified any complications they experienced during the test, on or before November 19, 2018. Because individual filings in the ETRS are presumptively confidential, the following observations are based on aggregated, anonymized data derived from these filings.³

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 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i). 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 The observations presented in this *Public Notice* are preliminary and are subject to change as the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) collaborates with FEMA to further analyze the results of the 2018 nationwide EAS test.

Initial test data indicate that the majority of EAS Participants successfully received and retransmitted the National Periodic Test (NPT) code used for the test. Overall, performance appears to be consistent with what was observed in the 2017 nationwide EAS test:⁴

- 19,200 radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) providers, wireline video systems, and other EAS Participants in all 50 states and the United States territories filed their receipt and retransmission results in the ETRS after the nationwide EAS test (19,069 did so in 2017).⁵
- 95.5% of test participants successfully received the test alert (95.8% successfully received in 2017).⁶ Table 1 breaks down these results by participant type.

Table 1. Alert Receipt by Participant Type

EAS Participant Type	2018 Test Participants	Successfully Received Alert in 2018		2017 Test Participants	Successfully Received Alert in 2017	
		#	%		#	%
Radio Broadcasters	13,465	12,961	96.3%	13,243	12,883	97.3%
Television Broadcasters	2,621	2,340	89.3%	2,734	2,421	88.6%
Cable Systems	2,792	2,731	97.8%	2,808	2,688	95.7%
IPTV Provider	243	231	95.1%	227	221	97.4%
Wireline Video System	63	63	100%	48	47	97.9%
Other ⁷	16	16	100%	9	9	100%
All Total	19,200	18,342	95.5%	19,069	18,269	95.8%

- 91.8% of test participants successfully retransmitted the test alert (91.9% successfully retransmitted in 2017).⁸ Table 2 breaks down these results by participant type.

⁴ FCC, Report: September 27, 2017 Nationwide EAS Test (April 2018), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-350223A1.pdf> (2017 Nationwide EAS Test Report).

⁵ *Id.* at 10.

⁶ *Id.* A “test participant,” as defined in the 2017 Nationwide EAS Test Report, is a unique EAS Participant that completed, at a minimum, ETRS Forms One and Two. *See id.* at 8, n.20 (defining test participant).

⁷ “Other” includes “non-cable multichannel video programming distributors” and other entities reported in the ETRS but not defined as EAS Participants in the EAS rules. Under FCC rules, the Commission treats test result data submitted by EAS Participants as presumptively confidential. Accordingly, results presented in this *Public Notice* reflect aggregated test result data to the extent doing so does not result in disclosure of confidential information. The Bureau does not provide data for very small EAS Participants types and does not include them among the total number of filings. The omission of this data does not change the assessment of the test in any significant way.

⁸ 2017 Nationwide EAS Test Report at 10.

Table 2. Alert Retransmission by Participant Type

EAS Participant Type	2018 Test Participants	Successfully Retransmitted Alert in 2018		2017 Test Participants	Successfully Retransmitted Alert in 2017	
		#	%		#	%
Radio Broadcasters	13,465	12,591	93.5%	13,243	12,450	94.0%
Television Broadcasters	2,621	2,202	84.0%	2,734	2,283	83.5%
Cable Systems	2,792	2,545	91.2%	2,808	2,535	90.3%
IPTV Provider	243	223	91.8%	227	197	86.8%
Wireline Video System	63	57	90.5%	48	45	93.8%
Other	16	15	93.8%	9	9	100%
All Total	19,200	17,633	91.8%	19,069	17,519	91.9%

- 90.9% of test participants that filed Form Three reported no complications in receiving the test alert (89.0% reported no complications receiving the alert in 2017).⁹
- 89.8% of test participants that filed Form Three reported no complications in retransmitting the test alert (88.3% reported no complications retransmitting the alert in 2017).¹⁰
- 756 test participants reported to have retransmitted the Spanish language version of the alert generated through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) (207 retransmitted in Spanish or both English and Spanish in 2017).¹¹
- 41.3% of test participants that filed Form Three and received the alert reported to have first received it over-the-air (58.1% in 2017), while 58.7% of such test participants reported to have first received the alert from IPAWS (41.9% in 2017).¹²

II. KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM WEA TEST RESULTS

The 2018 nationwide WEA test was the first nationwide test of the system. Because there is no existing requirement that Participating CMS Providers submit data regarding WEA alert message delivery, the Bureau reviewed and aggregated data from a variety of sources to determine the success of delivery of the WEA test message during the nationwide test. Based on this information, the Bureau observes that the WEA portion of the nationwide test successfully demonstrated that a WEA can be delivered nationwide, notwithstanding some inconsistencies in WEA reception by some individuals.

⁹ *Id.* at 13.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *See id.* at 12.

¹² *Id.* at 11.

- Several local emergency management agencies and other entities conducted informal surveys via email, social media, and the Internet to determine whether respondents received the WEA test message.¹³ In the aggregate, these surveys indicate that approximately 72% of respondents reported receiving the WEA test message.¹⁴
- The Bureau also received feedback from the public through the Public Safety Support Center (PSSC), which, through the week following the test, received a total of 316 responses. Of those responses, approximately 61% reported no problems in receiving a WEA. The remaining 39% either did not receive a WEA or received one that had issues including receipt of multiple messages or problems with the tone or vibration cadence.
- News reports indicate that in certain portions of the country, Participating CMS Providers did not successfully deliver the WEA test message.¹⁵ Other news reports indicated that WEA receipt was uneven, with some individuals receiving the alert while others in the same region did not.¹⁶ Additionally, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands did not receive the WEA portion of the test because they do not have cellular providers that participate in WEA.¹⁷

Together with FEMA, the Bureau will continue to analyze the results of the 2018 nationwide

¹³ See Letter from Benjamin J. Krakauer, Assistant Commissioner, Strategy & Program Development, New York City Emergency Management Department, to Marlene Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, PS Docket Nos. 15-91 and 15-94 (filed Nov. 21, 2018) (NYCEM *Ex Parte*); Thomas Crane, *The Presidential Alert: Was it a success?*, EVERBRIDGE (Oct. 15, 2018), <https://www.everbridge.com/blog/the-presidential-alert-was-it-a-success/> (Everbridge Blog Post); NPR (@NPR), TWITTER, (Oct. 3, 2018, 11:24 a.m.), <https://twitter.com/NPR/status/1047552920047292417> (NPR Twitter Poll); Kortnie Horazdovsky, 'Presidential Alert' results in Alaska split almost 50-50, survey says, KTUU (Oct. 10, 2018), <https://www.ktuu.com/content/news/Presidential-Alert-results-in-Alaska-split-almost-50-50-survey-says-496752991.html> (KTUU Alaska News Report).

¹⁴ See, e.g., NYCEM *Ex Parte* at 5 (reporting that 81.4% of respondents received the WEA test message); Everbridge Blog Post (based upon responses from over 3,500 people in all 50 states, 83% reported receiving the WEA message); NPR Twitter Poll (of 22,077 responses, 79% reported receiving the WEA presidential alert); KTUU Alaska News Report (reporting that an unscientific survey conducted by the Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management found that only 52.7% of Alaskans reported receiving the WEA test alert).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Q13 News Staff, *AT&T reports outages for wireless customers in Washington, Oregon and Alaska*, Q13 FOX (Oct. 3, 2018, 6:53 p.m.), <https://q13fox.com/2018/10/03/att-reports-widespread-outages-for-wireless-customers-in-washington-oregon-and-alaska/>; Paul Roberts, *Northwest's cell networks disrupted after 'presidential alert' text*, SEATTLE TIMES (Oct. 3, 2018, 6:24 p.m.), <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/regions-cell-networks-disrupted-after-presidential-text-alert/>.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Emily Dreyfuss, *Why Didn't I Get an Emergency Presidential Alert Text?*, WIRED (Oct. 3, 2018), <https://www.wired.com/story/why-didnt-i-get-emergency-presidential-alert-text/> (reporting that “[p]eople on every major carrier, with both old and brand new phones, reported not receiving the message”); Connor Pregizer, *If you didn't get that Presidential Alert text message today, you're not alone*, KPAX (Oct. 3, 2018), <https://kpax.com/news/montana-news/2018/10/03/if-you-didnt-get-that-presidential-alert-text-message-today-youre-not-alone/> (reporting that “even people in the same room were split in terms of who received the message and who did not,” with the author noting that of his two phones, “one received the alert twice, while the other did not receive the message at all”).

¹⁷ Press Release, Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense, *Nationwide Emergency Alert System Test Planned* (Aug. 3, 2018, 9:45 a.m.), <https://www.ghs.guam.gov/nationwide-emergency-alert-system-test-planned>; Editorial, *Guam should be included in the presidential alert system*, THE GUAM DAILY POST (Oct. 7, 2018), https://www.postguam.com/forum/editorial/guam-should-be-included-in-presidential-alert-system/article_1d971d76-c86e-11e8-aec7-c331fccc647c.html.

EAS and WEA tests and release more detailed findings when available. For further information, please contact Austin Randazzo, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-1462 or Austin.Randazzo@fcc.gov, or Elizabeth Cuttner, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-2145 or Elizabeth.Cuttner@fcc.gov.

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