



PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU PROVIDES GUIDANCE TO IMPROVE ACCURACY OF REPORTING FOR UPCOMING NATIONWIDE EAS TEST

PS Docket PS 15-94

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, 2019.¹ The 2019 nationwide test will be disseminated using a hierarchical, broadcast-based distribution system, otherwise known as the “daisy chain.”² By this Public Notice, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) provides guidance on actions Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participants³ can take to improve accuracy of reporting in the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS). Accurate reporting in the ETRS provides the Commission with important information on technical and operational performance that can help identify steps, if any, to further improve EAS as a reliable alerting tool and ensure people receive alerts in the event of an emergency.

During the 2018 nationwide EAS test, the Bureau identified several problems that affected the accuracy of reporting in ETRS, such as outdated software, poor audio, improper equipment configuration, and inaccurate EAS equipment system clocks.⁴ To assist EAS Participants in preparation for the upcoming nationwide EAS test, the Bureau provides the following recommendations.

- **State EAS Plan Monitoring Assignments.** EAS Participants should review their State EAS Plan monitoring assignments and work with State Emergency Communications Committee to ensure that they will receive a good signal from those assignments.⁵

¹ *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 15-94, Public Notice, DA 19-505, 2019 WL 2366898 (PSHSB Jun. 3, 2019).

² *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).

³ 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).

⁴ PSHSB, Report: October 3, 2018 Nationwide WEA and EAS Test at 20 (2019), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-356902A1.pdf>.

⁵ A list of State EAS Plans on file with the Commission is available here: <https://www.fcc.gov/public-safety-and-homeland-security/policy-and-licensing-division/alerting/general/state-eas-plans>.

- EAS Designations: EAS Participants should correctly identify their EAS Designation, or function within the EAS. Below are the most common EAS Designations and their abbreviated definitions. A complete listing is set forth in Section 11.18 of the Rules.⁶
 - A Primary Entry Point (PEP) is a private or commercial radio broadcast station that cooperatively participates with FEMA to provide EAS alerts to the public.
 - A National Primary (NP) is an entity tasked with the primary responsibility of receiving the Presidential Alert from a PEP and delivering it to an individual state or portion of a state.
 - A State Primary (SP) is an entity tasked with initiating the delivery of EAS alerts other than the Presidential Alert.
 - A Local Primary (LP) is an entity that serves as a monitoring assignment for other EAS Participants within the state.
 - A Participating National (PN) is an EAS Participant that transmits national, state, or Local Area EAS messages, and is not otherwise designated within the State EAS Plan.

- Equipment Configuration: Station managers should ensure that their EAS equipment is in good working order prior to the EAS test, including:
 - Software updates: EAS equipment software and firmware should be updated to the most recent version, and EAS equipment should be properly configured.
 - System clock: EAS equipment clocks that do not automatically synchronize to an Internet time source should be manually synchronized to the official time provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.⁷
 - Test code: EAS equipment should be configured to receive and process the National Program Test code and the “six zeroes” national location code.

For additional information, please contact Maureen Bizhko at Maureen.Bizhko@fcc.gov or (202) 418-0011.

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⁶ 47 CFR § 11.18.

⁷ National Institute of Standards and Technology, *Right Now, the Official NIST US Time Is*, <https://www.time.gov> (last visited Jul. 16, 2019).