



PUBLIC NOTICE

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**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**

PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94

Today, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) provides notice to all Participating Commercial Mobile Service (CMS) Providers,¹ Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participants,² and to the public that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the FCC, will conduct a nationwide test of the EAS and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on August 11, 2021, at 2:20 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), with a backup date of August 25, 2021 at 2:20 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).³ The Bureau also provides notice that the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) is now available to accept 2021 filings. All EAS Participants must renew their identifying information in ETRS Form One on or before July 6, 2021.

I. NATIONWIDE EAS AND WEA TEST

The primary test date is scheduled for Wednesday, August 11, 2021, 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 the same time on Wednesday, August 25, 2021. The test message will clearly state that the alert is only a test.⁴

¹ Participating CMS Providers are commercial mobile service providers that have elected voluntarily to transmit WEA alert messages. See 47 CFR §§ 10.10(d), (f).

² 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).

³ Letter from Alfred Kenyon, Chief, Customer Support Branch, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Program Office, National Continuity Programs, Department of Homeland Security – FEMA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission (filed May 3, 2021) (on file in PS Docket Nos. 15-91 and 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).

⁴ E-mail from Alfred Kenyon, Chief, Customer Support Branch, IPAWS Program Office, National Continuity Programs, Department of Homeland Security – FEMA, to Maureen Bizhko, Attorney Advisor, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, FCC (May 13, 2021); E-mail from Alfred Kenyon, Chief, Customer Support Branch, IPAWS Program Office, National Continuity Programs, Department of Homeland Security – FEMA, to Maureen Bizhko, Attorney Advisor, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, FCC (May 25, 2021).

FEMA will initiate the WEA portion of the nationwide test using the State/Local WEA Test category. Only those subscribers who have opted in to receive WEA test messages will receive the test message.⁵ Participating CMS Providers are required to transmit the State/Local Test message and enable subscribers to opt in to receive it.⁶ FEMA will transmit the alert in both English and Spanish.⁷

FEMA will transmit the EAS portion of the nationwide test through a hierarchical, broadcast-based distribution system, otherwise known as the “daisy chain.”⁸ Because the test will be disseminated in this manner, FEMA indicates that “full message text and multilingual messaging will not be available.”⁹ 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.”¹⁰ 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 part of our national emergency communications infrastructure.

All EAS Participants are required to participate in this nationwide EAS test.¹¹ 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;¹²

⁵ See 47 CFR § 10.350(c)(4). On November 1, 2016, the Commission adopted a Report and Order that amended its rules to permit emergency managers to conduct end-to-end WEA tests to the public to assess how WEA is working within their jurisdictions. See also *Wireless Emergency Alerts; Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission’s Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 11112, 11154-57, paras. 65-68 (2016) (*WEA R&O*). The Commission also required Participating CMS Providers to provide their subscribers with the option to receive State/Local WEA Test messages, whereby subscribers must affirmatively select the option to receive State/Local WEA Test messages. *WEA R&O*, 31 FCC Rcd at 11154-55, para. 65. This is the first time FEMA has initiated a nationwide Wireless Emergency Alert using the State/Local WEA Test category.

⁶ See 47 CFR §§ 10.350(c)(1)-(4).

⁷ FCC, *WEA Enhancements FAQs for Authorized Alert Originators*, <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless-emergency-alert-enhancements-faqs-authorized-alert-originators> (last visited May 21, 2021).

⁸ 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 distribution system as well as over the internet using IPAWS. The Commission’s rules require EAS Participants to be able to receive alerts from both IPAWS and the broadcast-based distribution system. See 47 CFR §§ 11.51(d), 11.56(a).

⁹ 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).

¹⁰ FEMA Letter of Intent at 1.

¹¹ See 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i); *Enforcement Bureau Reminds Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participants of Compliance Obligations*, FCC Enforcement Advisory, DA 21-10, January 7, 2021 (*Jan. 2021 EAS Enforcement Advisory*).

¹² 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>.

- 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;¹³
- Ensuring that EAS equipment can receive and process the NPT code,¹⁴ the "six zeroes" national location code, and otherwise operate in compliance with the Commission rules;¹⁵
- Upgrading EAS equipment software and firmware to the most recent version;¹⁶
- Manually synchronizing EAS equipment clocks to the official time provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology¹⁷ if an EAS Participant's equipment does not automatically synchronize to an Internet time source; and
- Reviewing their 2021 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 or any feedback concerning the receipt of or failure to receive the WEA test alert by 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 available to accept filings in connection with the 2021 nationwide test. 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.¹⁸ Accordingly, all EAS Participants must complete the 2021 ETRS Form One on or before July 6, 2021. On or before August 12, 2021, EAS Participants must file "day of test" information sought by ETRS Form Two.¹⁹ On or before September 27, 2021, EAS Participants must file the detailed post-test data sought by ETRS Form Three.²⁰ ETRS Forms Two and Three will become available in the ETRS at the time of initiation of the 2021 nationwide test.

Filers can access ETRS by visiting the ETRS page of the Commission's website at

¹³ 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).

¹⁴ See 47 CFR § 11.52(e).

¹⁵ See 47 CFR § 11.31(f).

¹⁶ An EAS Participant's failure to receive or transmit an EAS message during a national test or actual emergency because of an equipment failure may subject the EAS Participant to enforcement action. See *Jan. 2021 EAS Enforcement Advisory*.

¹⁷ National Institute of Standards and Technology, The Official NIST US Time, <http://www.time.gov>.

¹⁸ See 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(A).

¹⁹ 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).

²⁰ 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).

<https://www.fcc.gov/general/eas-test-reporting-system>.²¹ 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 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.²²
- 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.²³
- 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.²⁴

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. 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. 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, 2021) to submit any updates or corrections to their 2021 Form One filings.²⁵

III. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the nationwide EAS test, contact Maureen Bizhko, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-0011

²¹ Instructional videos regarding registration and completion of the ETRS Form One are also available on the ETRS website.

²² See 47 CFR § 11.11(b).

²³ See *id.*

²⁴ See *id.*

²⁵ See *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).

or maureen.bizhko@fcc.gov; Rosemary Cabral, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-0662 or rosemary.cabral@fcc.gov; or Christina Clearwater, Deputy Chief, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at (202) 418-1893 or christina.clearwater@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 with ETRS filings via ETRS@fcc.gov.

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