



**Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554**

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SMALL ENTITY COMPLIANCE GUIDE

**Wireless Emergency Alerts; Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the
Emergency Alert System**

FCC 25-14

PS Docket Nos. 15-91; 15-94

Released February 28, 2025

In accordance with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, this Small Entity Compliance Guide (Guide) is intended to help small entities—small businesses, small organizations (non-profits), and small governmental jurisdictions—comply with the rules adopted in the above-referenced Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) rulemaking dockets. This Guide is not intended to replace or supersede these rules, but to facilitate compliance with the rules. Although we have attempted to cover all parts of the rules that might be especially important to small entities, the coverage may not be exhaustive. This Guide cannot anticipate all situations in which the rules apply. Furthermore, the Commission retains the discretion to adopt case-by-case approaches, where appropriate, that may differ from this Guide. Any decision regarding a particular small entity will be based on the statute and any relevant rules.

In any civil or administrative action against a small entity for a violation of rules, the content of the Guide may be considered as evidence of the reasonableness or appropriateness of proposed fines, penalties or damages. Interested parties are free to file comments regarding this Guide in the above referenced docket and the appropriateness of its application to a particular situation. The Commission will then consider whether the recommendations or interpretations in the Guide are appropriate in that situation. The Commission may decide to revise this Guide without public notice to reflect changes in its approach to implementing a rule, or it may clarify or update the text of the Guide. Please direct comments and recommendations, or requests for further assistance, to the FCC's Consumer Center:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	OBJECTIVES OF THE PROCEEDING	1
II.	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	1
III.	RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	3
IV.	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	3
V.	INTERNET LINKS	3

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROCEEDING

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) is a public alerting system that delivers geographically targeted, text-like messages to consumers with compatible mobile devices. While wireless providers participate in WEA voluntarily, those that elect to participate must adhere to the technical and operational requirements established by the Commission. Authorized federal, Tribal, state, local, and territorial public safety officials can send WEA messages through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System to wireless providers that have elected to participate. Participating wireless providers then transmit WEA messages from cell towers to mobile devices in targeted area. To ensure that mobile device users know when they receive a WEA message, receipt of a WEA message triggers the mobile device to emit an "attention signal" comprising a common audio attention signal and vibration cadence. Alert originators are generally in the best position to make the determination of whether an alert will trigger the common audio attention signal, common vibration cadence, or both. Therefore the *Seventh Report and Order* gives "maximum flexibility" to alerting authorities.

The *Seventh Report and Order* requires participating wireless providers to support "silent alerts," which are defined as alerts that do not automatically trigger the common audio attention signal, the common vibration cadence, or both.¹ The ability to send silent alerts will be particularly beneficial in three scenarios: (1) AMBER Alerts, Missing and Endangered Persons (MEP) Alerts, and Blue Alerts sent either statewide or overnight; (2) follow-up messaging to relay additional, essential actions likely to save lives and/or safeguard property during ongoing emergencies; and (3) active shooter situations. While using silent alerts will not completely eliminate the reasons that people opt out of WEA, using silent alerts can limit and/or reduce alert fatigue and consumer opt out, as well as make WEA a more versatile tool during active shooter situations.

To continue to ensure that WEA messages are accessible to all mobile device users, the *Seventh Report and Order* requires that WEA-capable mobile devices enable their users to override the alert originators' choice to suppress the common vibration cadence. To increase WEA's availability and aid consumers in making an informed decision when they purchase a new mobile device, the *Seventh Report and Order* also revises the definition of a "mobile device," and distinguishes it from a "WEA-capable mobile device." The revised definitions are effective 180 days from the publication of the *Seventh Report and Order* in the *Federal Register*. The silent alert requirements must be implemented no later than 36 months from the publication of the *Seventh Report and Order* in the *Federal Register*.

II. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

A. Provide Alert Originators the Ability to Send Silent Alerts (47 CFR § 10.490)

Participating wireless providers must support an alert originator's selection of whether a WEA message will be presented silently, i.e., without triggering the common audio attention, the common vibration cadence, or both, in the mobile device presenting the WEA Alert Message. For example, if the alert originator indicates that a specific alert should not play the attention signal and should not cause the device to vibrate, then participating wireless providers should send those instructions to the device in an appropriate manner resulting in the device executing the instructions.

B. Provide Device Users the Ability to Override Silent Alerts Using the Vibration Cadence (47 CFR § 10.530(d))

Participating wireless providers and equipment manufacturers must allow users of WEA-capable mobile devices to enable the presentation of the common vibration cadence for all WEA messages, including those where the alert originator decided to send the alert without triggering the common

¹ See *Wireless Emergency Alerts, Amendments of Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket Nos. 15-91 and 15-94, *Seventh Report and Order* and *Eleventh Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC 25-14, 2025 WL 705781 (Feb. 28, 2025) (*Seventh Report and Order*).

vibration cadence. Guidance for consumers about the availability of those options will be available on the FCC website at a future date.

C. “Mobile Device” for the Purpose of WEA (47 CFR § 10.10(j))

For purposes of Part 10 of the Commission’s rules, a “mobile device” is defined as any customer equipment used to receive commercial mobile service.

D. “WEA-Capable Mobile Device” (47 CFR §§ 10.10(k), 10.500(j), 10.520, 10.530)

The definition of a WEA-capable mobile device, is a mobile device that is compliant with all of the Commission’s WEA rules. The *Seventh Report and Order* adds compliance with support of the Alert Message Requirements in subpart D, and the equipment requirements in subpart E for classification as a WEA-capable mobile device.

1. To be compliant and marketed as a “WEA-capable mobile device,” under the Commission’s WEA rules, a device must be capable of performing the following functions:²
 - a. Authentication of interactions with wireless provider infrastructure;
 - b. Monitoring for alert messages;
 - c. Maintaining subscriber alert opt-out selections;
 - d. Maintaining subscriber alert language preferences;
 - e. Extraction of alert content in English or the subscriber’s preferred language;
 - f. Presentation of alert content to the device, consistent with subscriber opt-out selections;
 - g. Detection and suppression of presentation of duplicate alerts;
 - h. Preservation of WEAs in a consumer-accessible format and location for at least 24 hours or until deleted by the subscriber;
 - i. Prohibit WEAs from preempting an active voice or data session;
 - j. Support the common audio attention signal,
 - k. Support the common vibration cadence; and,
 - l. Support the Alert Message Requirements in subpart D of the Commission’s rules.
2. To continue to be defined and marketed as a WEA-capable mobile device requires devices to comply with:
 - a. any new Alert Message Requirements in subpart D, or equipment requirements in subpart E in accordance with the implementation deadline for any such requirements.
 - b. any already-adopted but not yet effective Commission WEA rules in accordance with the effective date for any such requirements.³
3. Mobile devices that are no longer considered to be WEA-capable as a result of the regulatory changes in the *Seventh Report and Order* will continue to be able to receive WEAs even though the devices do not support all WEA features. A consumer guide regarding the capabilities of

² The requirements listed in section II D (1)(a) – (i) of this Guide are existing Commission requirements in 47 CFR § 10.500(a) - (h), and 47 CFR § 10.510.

³ This includes the Commission-adopted WEA rule requiring manufacturers to implement multilingual templates for WEA that alert originators can choose to send during life threatening emergencies that is not yet effective. The rule will become effective 30 months after the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau publishes the final rules in the Federal Register. See *Wireless Emergency Alerts; Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94, Report and Order, DA 25-12 (PSHSB 2025).

WEA-capable mobile devices will be available on the FCC website at a future date.

III. RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The *Seventh Report and Order* did not create any new reporting or recordkeeping requirements.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION DATES

The following rules in the *Seventh Report and Order* shall become effective on September 15, 2025, 180 days after publication of a summary of the *Seventh Report and Order* in the *Federal Register*, the definition of a mobile device for the purpose of WEA, the definition of a “WEA-capable mobile device,” and conforming edits in sections 10.10(j)-(m), the introductory text of section 10.500, section 10.500(i)-(j), the introductory text of section 10.520, and the introductory text of section 10.530.

The following rules in the *Seventh Report and Order* shall become effective on March 20, 2028, 36 months after publication of a summary of the *Seventh Report and Order* in the *Federal Register*, the silent alert rules in sections 10.490 and 10.530(d).

V. INTERNET LINKS

A copy of the *Seventh Report and Order*, is available at:
<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-25-14A1.pdf>.

A copy of the *Federal Register* summary of the *Seventh Report and Order* is available at:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/18/2025-04126/wireless-emergency-alerts-emergency-alert-system>.

The Commission’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) webpage compiling relevant information on WEA is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/public-safety-and-homeland-security/policy-and-licensing-division/alerting/general/wireless>.