

# NEWS

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission Action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MVI v. FCC. 516 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974)

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Report No. CI 98-26

COMPLIANCE & INFORMATION ACTION  
November 30, 1998

## **FCC TO INCREASE ENFORCEMENT OF EAS REGULATIONS**

The Federal Communications Commission today urged broadcasters to come into 100% compliance with the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Following a recent survey of 653 AM, FM, and TV broadcast stations, the Commission said that stations have improved compliance with EAS requirements, but must increase their efforts to do a better job.

Because EAS compliance is not at 100 percent, the FCC's field offices will conduct inspections of AM, FM, and TV stations to ensure that the stations are meeting the EAS requirements, and may issue forfeitures to stations which do not meet the EAS requirements. To give stations a chance to improve their EAS compliance, the FCC will not begin its inspection program until February 1, 1999.

The survey found that during the past year, the compliance levels of the 653 stations were below expectations in the following categories.

1. EAS equipment installed and operating (87 percent compliance). Stations must have an EAS encoder and decoder in operating condition.
2. Monitoring the correct station (83 percent compliance). Licensees must monitor two other EAS sources (mostly broadcast stations) for an EAS alert.
3. Maintaining EAS logs (77 percent compliance). Log the weekly tests, monthly test, and any equipment malfunction.
4. EAS Handbook availability (85 percent compliance). The handbook must be readily available.

5. Sending and receiving EAS tests (76 percent compliance). Stations must send and receive weekly EAS tests. They must also retransmit a monthly test. This reflects on how well stations may handle messages during an emergency.

The Emergency Alert system is the new improved digital version of the old Emergency Broadcast System (EBS).

EAS provides the President a means to communicate with the public in the event of a national emergency. When not in use by the President, EAS can be used by State and local officials for communicating public information about local emergencies affecting life and property. So far this year, the Commission has received over 500 reports from broadcasters who have activated EAS locally to broadcast public notices about events such as tornadoes, flash floods and evacuations.

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