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tina.pelkey@fcc.gov**For Immediate Release****FCC CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCES THAT IMPROVED WIRELESS
EMERGENCY ALERTS NOW AVAILABLE*****Better Geotargeting & Other Improvements Will Help Public Safety Officials Warn
and Protect Communities***

WASHINGTON, December 19, 2019—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai today announced availability of a suite of enhancements to [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#) that will enable Americans to receive more geographically precise, effective, and informative alerts on their mobile phones during emergencies, which will help save lives.

“One of my key public safety priorities has been to ensure that America’s emergency alerting system meets the needs of public safety officials and the communities they serve,” said Chairman Pai. “With these improvements, Wireless Emergency Alerts are now an even more powerful tool for emergency managers to warn and protect the public. These improvements respond to input we’ve received from the public safety community and will help save lives.”

Local officials are now better able to send geotargeted wireless alerts to areas affected by an emergency without reaching unaffected communities, which will increase confidence in alerting and promote public safety—especially during evacuations. Officials can also now send more informative and relevant content in alert messages.

As a result of FCC rules, the following improvements are now available:

- **Geographic Accuracy:** Wireless providers that participate in Wireless Emergency Alerts must deliver the messages to the area specified by the alert originator with no more than a 1/10 of a mile overshoot, as opposed to the prior “best approximation” standard.
- **Longer Messages & Better Reach:** Wireless Emergency Alerts will accommodate longer messages—an increase from 90 to 360 characters—and messages in Spanish.
- **New Alert Type:** There is a new class of alerts (“Public Safety Messages”) for officials to convey recommendations for saving lives or property, such as the location of emergency shelters after a disaster.
- **Better Testing:** Emergency managers can now conduct state and local Wireless Emergency Alert tests that reach only consumers who choose to participate, and these tests do not require a waiver from the FCC.

In addition, as of last May, all participating wireless providers must support “clickable” links in alerts so that messages can include links to photos and other additional information.

To take advantage of these enhancements, emergency managers should ensure that their alerting software supports these upgrades. The FCC has also published [FAQs](#) about the enhancements to assist emergency managers.

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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 MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).