

Media Contact:

Rochelle Cohen, (202) 418-1162
rochelle.cohen@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release**FCC FURTHER STRENGTHENS EMERGENCY ALERTING**

WASHINGTON, June 17, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted rules to improve the way the public receives emergency alerts on their mobile phones, televisions, and radios.

The nation’s Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts help keep the public safe and informed and are of ever-increasing importance given the emergencies and disasters Americans have faced in recent years. In 2018, however, a false emergency alert in Hawaii mistakenly warned of an incoming ballistic missile and highlighted the need to improve these systems.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 subsequently directed the Commission, in consultation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to adopt rules to strengthen emergency alerting in various areas. Consistent with this directive, the Commission today adopted a Report and Order to ensure that more people receive relevant emergency alerts, enable government agencies to report any false alerts, and improve the way states plan for emergency alerts.

Specifically, the Report and Order:

- Combines the current “Presidential Alerts” category, which is non-optional on devices that receive Wireless Emergency Alerts, with alerts from the FEMA Administrator to form a new non-optional alert class called “National Alerts;”
- Encourages all states to form State Emergency Communications Committees, which help administer alerting on the state level, or to review the composition and governance of existing committees, as well as require certification of annual committee meetings;
- Provides a checklist of information that should be included in annual state Emergency Alert System plans and amends the process for Commission review of those plans;
- Specifies that government agencies may report false emergency alerts to the FCC’s 24/7 Operations Center; and
- Clarifies how alert originators can repeat their alert transmissions.

The Commission also adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that seeks comment on additional potential improvements to the Emergency Alert System recommended by FEMA.

Action by the Commission June 17, 2021 by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 21-77). Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks,

and Simington approving. Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioners Carr issuing separate statements.

PS Docket Nos. 15-94, 15-91

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / www.fcc.gov

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).