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For Immediate Release

FCC IMPROVES EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM MESSAGES

TV and Radio Alerts Will Be Clearer and More Accessible to the Public

WASHINGTON, September 29, 2022—The Federal Communications Commission today updated its Emergency Alert System rules so that alerts delivered over television and radio are more informative and easier to understand by the public, particularly people with disabilities.

The Emergency Alert System, which is used by government agencies to send alerts and warnings to the public over television and radio, is comprised of both a legacy system and an Internet-based system, with the latter offering superior messaging capabilities. The updated rules require broadcasters, cable systems, and other Emergency Alert System participants to transmit the Internet-based version of alerts to the public when available, rather than transmit the legacy version of alerts. The increased use of Internet-based alerts, in Common Alerting Protocol format, will produce higher-quality audio messages, improve the availability of multilingual alerts, and ensure that more of the alerts displayed on television screens contain all of the information provided by the government.

The updated rules will also replace the technical jargon that accompanies certain alerts, including test messages, with plain language terms so that the visual and audio messages are clearer to the public.

As a result of today's action by the Commission, people who are deaf or hard of hearing will have access to alerts in a viewable format that more closely matches the audible versions of these alert messages on television. In addition, people who are blind or visually impaired will have access on their radios to national alerts containing more detailed audio information. Clearer and more accessible alerts will help all Americans prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Action by the Commission September 29, 2022 by Report and Order (FCC 22-75).
Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving.
Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

PS Docket No. 15-94

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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).

