



FEMA, FCC Announce Nationwide Test Of The Emergency Alert System

Similar to local Emergency Alert System Tests, this Test is Scheduled to Take Place on November 9, 2011

Release Date: June 9, 2011

Release Number: HQ-11-099

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will conduct the first nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The nationwide test will occur on Wednesday, November 9 at 2 p.m. eastern standard time and may last up to three and a half minutes.

The EAS is a national alert and warning system established to enable the President of the United States to address the American public during emergencies. NOAA's National Weather Service, governors and state and local emergency authorities also use parts of the system to issue more localized emergency alerts.

Similar to local EAS tests that are already conducted frequently, the nationwide test will involve broadcast radio and television stations, cable television, satellite radio and television services and wireline video service providers across all states and the territories of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa.

On November 9, the public will hear a message indicating that "This is a test." The audio message will be the same for both radio and television. Under the FCC's rules, radio and television broadcasters, cable operators, satellite digital audio radio service providers, direct broadcast satellite service providers and wireline video service providers are required to receive and transmit presidential EAS messages to the public. A national test will help the federal partners and EAS participants determine the reliability of the system and its effectiveness in notifying the public of emergencies and potential dangers nationally and regionally.

"A national test of our Emergency Alert System, with the vital communications support and involvement of participants, is a step towards ensuring that the alert and warning community is prepared to deliver critical information that can help save lives and protect property," said Damon Penn, FEMA's Assistant Administrator of National Continuity Programs. "Because there has never been an activation of the Emergency Alert System on a national level, FEMA views this test as an excellent opportunity to assess the readiness and effectiveness of the current system. It is important to remember that this is not a pass or fail test, but a chance to establish a baseline for making incremental improvements to the Emergency Alert System with ongoing and future testing. It is also important to remember that the Emergency Alert System

is one of many tools in our communications toolbox, and we will continue to work on additional channels that can be a lifeline of information for people during an emergency."

"The upcoming national test is critical to ensuring that the EAS works as designed," said Jamie Barnett, Chief of the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. "As recent disasters here at home and in Japan have reminded us, a reliable and effective emergency alert and warning system is key to ensuring the public's safety during times of emergency. We look forward to working with FEMA in preparation for this important test."

Over the past two years and as part of ongoing national preparedness planning efforts, FEMA, the FCC and other federal partners, state, local, tribal and territorial governments, Emergency Alert System participants and other stakeholders have been working toward making this test a reality.

As the federal, state, tribal, territorial and local governments prepare for and test their capabilities, this event serves as a reminder that everyone should establish an emergency preparedness kit and emergency plan for themselves, their families, communities, and businesses. Anyone can visit www.Ready.gov for more information about how to prepare for and stay informed about what to do in the event of an actual emergency.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.