



PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU ANNOUNCES INITIAL FINDINGS REGARDING 2019 NATIONWIDE TEST OF EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

PS Docket No. 15-94

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission), conducted a nationwide test of the EAS at 2:20 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on August 7, 2019.¹ This Public Notice provides an initial overview of the 2019 nationwide Emergency Alert System (EAS) test results.² FEMA disseminated the live test using the hierarchical, broadcast-based distribution system, otherwise known as the “daisy chain,”³ to assess whether the national EAS would perform as designed, if activated, and to help to ensure the reliability and effectiveness of broadcast-based alerting as a failsafe to our national emergency communications infrastructure.⁴ All EAS Participants were required to participate in the nationwide test.⁵

EAS Participants nationwide were required to submit identifying information in Form One of the

¹ *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Announces Nationwide Test of the Emergency Alert System on August 7, 2019 and Opens the EAS Test Reporting System for 2019 Filings*, Public Notice, PS Docket No. 15-94, 34 FCC Rcd 4347 (PSHSB 2019); *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Reminds EAS Participants of Upcoming Dates and Deadlines for 2019 Nationwide EAS Test*, Public Notice, PS Docket No. 15-94, 34 FCC Rcd 5210 (PSHSB 2019).

² FCC, Report: October 3, 2018 Nationwide WEA and EAS Test (rel. April 2019), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-356902A1.pdf> (2018 Nationwide WEA and EAS Test Report). The 2019 nationwide test did not include Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

³ See *Review of the Emergency Alert System*, EB Docket No. 04-296, Sixth Report and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 6520, 6522-23, paras. 4-6 (2015) (*Sixth Report and Order*) (describing EAS architecture). In past years, FEMA has distributed the nationwide EAS test through both the broadcast-based daisy chain as well as over the Internet using the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The Commission’s rules require EAS Participants to be able to receive alerts from both IPAWS and the broadcast-based EAS structure. See 47 CFR §§ 11.51(d), 11.56(a).

⁴ Due to the over-the-air dissemination, the test message was only transmitted in English and did not include full message text. See Letter from Alfred Kenyon, Chief, Customer Support Branch, IPAWS Program Office, National Continuity Programs, Department of Homeland Security – FEMA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, at 1 (filed May 22, 2019) (on file in PS Docket No. 15-94).

⁵ 47 CFR § 11.61(a)(3)(i). EAS Participants are those entities that are required to comply with the Commission’s EAS rules, including radio and television stations, cable television systems, direct broadcast satellite, Satellite

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EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS) on or prior to July 3, 2019,⁶ and “day of test” results indicating whether they successfully received (Table 1) and retransmitted (Table 2) the test alert on August 7, 2019.⁷ Finally, EAS Participants were required to file Form Three, specifying how they received the alert and identified any complications they experienced during the test, on or before September 23, 2019.⁸ Because individual filings in the ETRS are presumptively confidential, the following observations are based on aggregated, anonymized data derived from these filings.⁹

Initial test data indicate that the majority of EAS Participants successfully received and retransmitted the National Periodic Test (NPT) code used for the test.

- 19,607 radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) providers, wireline video systems, and other EAS Participants in all 50 states and the United States territories filed their receipt and retransmission results in the ETRS after the nationwide EAS test.
- 84.3% of test participants successfully received the test alert.¹⁰
- Of the test participants that reported successfully receiving the test alert, 49.0% reported monitoring three or more over-the-air sources.¹¹
- 81.5% of test participants successfully retransmitted the test alert.
- 69.0% of test participants that filed Form Three reported no complications in receiving the test alert. 12.2% of test participants that filed Form Three reported audio quality issues with receipt.
- 74.4% of test participants that filed Form Three reported no complications in retransmitting the test alert. 6.9% of test participants that filed Form Three reported “other” issues with retransmission.

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Digital Audio Radio Service, digital audio broadcasting systems, and wireline video systems. *Id.* §§ 11.2(b), 11.11(a).

⁶ *See id.* § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(A).

⁷ *See id.* § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(B) (EAS Participants are required to file “day of test” data within 24 hours of any nationwide EAS test or as otherwise required by the Bureau).

⁸ *See id.* § 11.61(a)(3)(iv)(C) (EAS Participants are required to file detailed post-test data within 45 days following a nationwide EAS test).

⁹ Observations presented in this *Public Notice* are preliminary and subject to change as the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) collaborates with FEMA to further analyze results of the 2019 nationwide EAS test. One filer who submitted data on a timely basis on behalf of a significant number of EAS Participants made an obvious clerical error, which we have confirmed with the filer and corrected.

¹⁰ A “test participant,” as defined in the 2018 Nationwide WEA and EAS Test Report, is a unique EAS Participant that completed, at a minimum, ETRS Forms One and Two. *See* 2018 Nationwide WEA and EAS Test Report at 13, n.56 (defining test participant).

¹¹ EAS Participants are required to monitor two over-the-air sources for EAS messages formatted in accordance with the EAS Protocol, as specified in the EAS Participant’s State EAS Plan. 47 CFR § 11.52(d)(1). Although IPAWS was not utilized in distribution of the 2019 nationwide EAS test, EAS Participants are required to maintain equipment capable of interfacing with IPAWS. *Id.* § 11.52(d)(2).

Table 1. Alert Receipt by Participant Type

EAS Participant Type	2019 Test Participants	Successfully Received Alert	
		#	%
Radio Broadcasters	13,940	11,782	84.5%
Television Broadcasters	2,717	2,189	80.6%
Cable Systems	2,626	2,294	87.4%
IPTV Provider	254	202	79.5%
Wireline Video System	61	57	93.4%
Other ¹²	9	8	88.9%
All Total	19,607	16,532	84.3%

Table 2. Alert Retransmission by Participant Type

EAS Participant Type	2019 Test Participants	Successfully Retransmitted Alert	
		#	%
Radio Broadcasters	13,940	11,501	82.5%
Television Broadcasters	2,717	2,050	75.5%
Cable Systems	2,626	2,187	83.3%
IPTV Provider	254	193	76.0%
Wireline Video System	61	47	77.0%
Other	9	8	88.9%
All Total	19,607	15,986	81.5%

Together with FEMA, the Bureau will continue to analyze the results of the 2019 nationwide EAS test and release more detailed findings when available. For further information, please contact Maureen Bizhko, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-0011 or Maureen.Bizkho@fcc.gov.

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¹² “Other” includes “non-cable multichannel video programming distributors” and other entities reported in the ETRS but not defined as EAS Participants in the EAS rules. Under FCC rules, the Commission treats test result data submitted by EAS Participants as presumptively confidential. Accordingly, results presented in this *Public Notice* reflect aggregated test result data to the extent doing so does not result in disclosure of confidential information. The Bureau does not provide data for very small EAS Participants types and does not include them among the total number of filings. The omission of this data does not change the assessment of the test in any significant way.