



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283

FCC MAIL ROOM

Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RM 9215

Dear Secretary Salas:

This is a follow-up to the letter our National Weather Service Director sent to the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) several months ago on proposed rules changes to the Emergency Alert System (EAS). For your convenience, following is a summary of our proposals that we would like to have implemented. Three attachments further provide a brief explanation of each of the items below, including a list of proposed changes to EAS event codes.

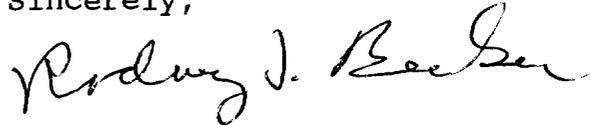
- 1) Allow EAS equipment to log the receipt of only those codes for which the specific unit is programmed to process.
- 2) Adopt a naming convention for how certain messages will be defined and coded.
- 3) Reserve the third letter in the event code set for critical messages to enhance message processing in consumer products.
- 4) Modify the current EAS event code set by classifying the codes as:
 - A) National - Immediate Threat
 - B) National - Administrative
 - C) Local - Immediate Threat
 - D) Local - Informational
 - E) Local - Administrative
 - F) Non-EAS Applications -- and --
 remove unused codes, and add the new codes.
- 5) Reserve the county numbers of 900 to 999 for special alerting areas.
- 6) Reserve special state and county numbers not defined by the FIPS for the oceans, Gulf of Mexico and Great Lakes.
- 7) Allow the use of any combination of the standard alphabet and numbers in the CCC part of the geographic code.

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8) Include a statement in the rules that EAS equipment manufacturers should ensure their equipment is compatible with the non-EAS applications of the NOAA Weather Radio Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) part of the EAS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rodney J. Becker".

Rodney J. Becker
Dissemination Services Manager

cc:
Frank Lucia - FCC, Room 736

Attachment 1

Explanation of Requested Changes

- 1) This change will allow the NWS and others to use EAS and non-EAS codes freely for testing, exercises, and a multitude of other applications without causing media and others' EAS equipment to log the receipt of the codes or to process them in some other way. Stated another way, the unit should ignore any event and geographic pair it is not programmed to process.
- 2) Title all events as WARNING that pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property, probability of occurrence and location is high, and the onset time is relatively short. Title all events as WATCH that meet the classification of a warning but either the onset time, probability of occurrence or location is uncertain. Reserve the title EMERGENCY for future applications that do not fit the WARNING or WATCH definition but are of such a nature that the information is important and may require public response. Title follow-up information messages as STATEMENT.
- 3) Limit the use of the third letter in the event code as follows:
 - W for WARNINGS
 - A for WATCHES
 - E for EMERGENCIES
 - S for STATEMENTS
- 4) Detailed listing of event code set with requested actions. This list contains all the current codes used by the EAS and NWR-SAME. Codes listed as non-EAS applications and information may not be appropriate for inclusion in FCC Rules Part 11, but need to be part of the master list the FCC will maintain as part of the EAS Tri-Agency Memorandum of Understanding. The detailed listing is in Attachment 2.
- 5) No further explanation needed. Creating a master list for these similar to those in Attachments 2 and 3 may be helpful.
- 6) Attachment 3 contains a list of the geographic codes for the open warnings of the oceans, Gulf of Mexico, and Great Lakes.
- 7) Organizations responsible for the warning communications associated with special facilities -- such as nuclear power plants, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons storage facilities, and plants that produce and store hazardous materials -- are now using ,or evaluating the use of, the NWR as its primary radio type communications system. The reasons are lower cost and greater public acceptance of receiver devices to name just two. These organizations must be able to communicate with both hearing and deaf people, keep messages brief, and address very unique alerting areas. The current limitation of 31 geographic codes in any one message and no text standard makes it

impossible for them to meet their requirements. By allowing the geographic code blocks to include both numbers and letters plus the *, this would allow them to be able to create up to 1.4 million possible geographic code and message combinations. Text messages could be stored in each receiver that, depending on the code received, provide almost site specific information such as shelter in place instructions, evacuation routes, and safe areas among many others. The regular geographic codes would be included in the messages for benefit of normal EAS operations. All that is necessary for the rules is to provide a statement in Section 11.31 (3), after "PSSCCC" - such as:

"Location codes transmitted over NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) or special emergency management frequencies, but originated by security or communications centers at special hazardous materials storage or production facilities, may contain a combination of numbers, letters and other characters. The authorized set of ASCII characters is Decimals 10 and 13, and Decimals 33 to 127, inclusive. ASCII Decimals 43 and 45 shall not be used as part of the six-character location code, but used only at the end of the location block as shown in the symbolic form. The ASCII character Decimal 42 (*) is reserved for the use of a "wild card" only. These special codes are to activate customized receivers, prestored text messages, and/or special equipment. EAS decoders monitoring one or more of these frequencies need not respond to such codes for EAS purposes but should be capable of passing them along in any retransmission of the header code. Radio, television, or cable systems covered by FCC Rules Part 11 are not prohibited from using these codes in peripheral equipment to further enhance the safety of the public in cooperation with local government officials or facility managers."

8) The NWR has a service requirement that extends well beyond its role as an entry of messages into the EAS. It is important for all EAS equipment manufacturers to be aware of the NWR's non-EAS Specific Area Message Encoding applications. It is recommended that a paragraph (d) be added to FCC Rules Part 11, Section 33, EAS Decoders, such as:

"Recognizing that the digital code part of EAS and the NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) as operated by the National Weather Service (NWS) are identical, decoder equipment manufacturers should ensure their systems are compatible with the EAS and non-EAS applications of the NWR-SAME such as the use of the NWR Warning Alarm Tone and non-EAS message identification code."

Master EAS and NWR-SAME Event Code List

Nature of Activation	Event Code	Status
<u>National - Immediate Threat</u>		
Emergency Action Notification	EAN	No Change
Emergency Action Termination	EAT	No Change
National Information Center	NIC	No Change
<u>National - Administrative</u>		
National Periodic Test	NPT	No Change
<u>Local - Immediate Threat</u>		
Tornado Watch	TOA	No Change
Tornado Warning	TOW	Change from TOR
Severe Thunderstorm Watch	SVA	No Change
Severe Thunderstorm Warning	SVW	Change from SVR
Flash Flood Watch	FFA	No Change
Flash Flood Warning	FFW	No Change
Flood Watch	FLA	No Change
Flood Warning	FLW	No Change
Winter Storm Warning	WSW	No Change
Blizzard Warning	BZW	No Change
High Wind/Dust Storm Warning	HWW	Includes Dust Storm
Hurricane/Trop. Storm Watch	HUA	Includes Tropical Storm
Hurricane/Trop. Storm Warning	HUA	Includes Tropical Storm
Tsunami Warning	TSW	No Change
Coastal Flood Watch	CFA	Add to List
Coastal Flood Warning	CFW	Add to List
Special Marine Warning	SMW	Add to List
Avalanche Watch	AVA	Add to List
Avalanche Warning	AVW	Add to List
Volcano Watch	VOA	Add to List
Volcano Warning	VOW	Add to List
Evacuation Immediate	EVI	Delete from List
Immediate Evacuation Warning	IEW	Add to List
Shelter In Place Warning	SPW	Add to List
Civil Danger Watch	CDA	Add to List
Civil Danger Warning	CDW	Add to List

Nature of Activation	Event Code	Status
<u>Local - Immediate Threat (cont'd)</u>		
Civil Emergency Message	CEM	Delete from List
Radiological Hazard Watch	RHA	Add to List
Radiological Hazard Warning	RHW	Add to List
Hazardous Materials Watch	HMA	Add to List
Hazardous Materials Warning	HMW	Add to List
Law Enforcement Warning	LEW	Add to List
Fire Warning	FRW	Add to List

Local - Information

Network Message Notification	NMN	Add to List
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Local - Administrative

Required Monthly Test	RMT	No Change
Required Weekly Test	RWT	No Change
Administrative Message	ADR	No Change
System Demonstration/Practice	DMO	No Change

Non-EAS Applications

Severe Weather Statement	SVS	Removed from EAS Use
Special Weather Statement	SPS	Removed from EAS Use
Flash Flood Statement	FFS	Removed from EAS Use
Flood Statement	FLS	Removed from EAS Use
Hurricane Statement	HLS	Removed from EAS Use
Winter Storm Watch	WSA	Removed from EAS Use
High Wind/Dust Storm Watch	HWA	Removed from EAS Use
Tsunami Watch	TSA	Removed from EAS Use
Transmitter Primary On	TXP	Add to List
Transmitter Backup On	TXB	Add to List

Attachment 3

Master Geographic Code Set For Non-FIPS Covered Areas

Special SS Code Set

AN Western North Atlantic Ocean, and along U.S. East Coast,
from Canadian border south to Currituck Beach Light, NC

AM Western North Atlantic Ocean, and along U.S. East Coast
south of Currituck Beach Light, NC, following the coastline
into Gulf of Mexico to Bonita Beach, FL, including the
Caribbean

GM Gulf of Mexico, and along the U.S. Gulf Coast from the
Mexican border to Bonita Beach, FL

PZ Eastern North Pacific Ocean, and along U.S. West Coast from
Canadian border to Mexican border

PK North Pacific Ocean near Alaska, and along Alaska coastline,
including the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska

PH Central Pacific Ocean, including Hawaiian waters

PM Western Pacific Ocean, including Mariana Islands waters

PS South Central Pacific ocean, including American Samoa waters

LS Lake Superior
LM Lake Michigan
LH Lake Huron
LC Lake St. Clair
LE Lake Erie
LO Lake Ontario
SL St. Lawrence River above St. Regis

Special CCC Code Set for non-FIPS Open Waters

(Further code details will be provided shortly.)

0NN701 Location
0NN702 Location
etc

0YY701 Location
0YY702 Location
etc

0ZZ701 Location
0ZZ702 Location
etc.

0XX701 Location
0XX702 Location
etc.