

60001422223.txt

Mr. Gilbert Sebenste
Staff Meteorologist, Northern Illinois University (NIU)
On behalf of the NIU Environmental Health and Safety department
February 3, 2016

To: Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC

Re: Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) Length

To whom it may concern,

The NIU Environmental Health and Safety department am in full support of expanding the length of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA's) to 360 characters, as well as all other proposed changes made in 15-91. As technology continues to evolve, longer text messages containing more life-saving information is needed. Making them longer will also provide more information to the disabled, and disadvantaged who may not normally get a warning except through their phone. Images and maps, especially with weather information, could improve safety by showing the exact threat area, helping the person receiving the message to make a more informed decision.

To further improve geo-targeting...if the smart or other phone has a built in and working GPS, it can be used to effectively eliminate an additional false alarm caused by the phone going off for an area outside the tornado warning polygon, or the affected emergency. If a built-in GPS is available, it should allow the bulletin to alert the user if he/she is in the danger area, or not. Otherwise, if the alert affects portions of the cell tower service area, then by default the user should get it.

Thank you for your time,
Gilbert Sebenste
Staff Meteorologist
Northern Illinois University