

The Emergency Alert System is not a viable system for emergency communications for many reasons. As executive director of the Fair Media Council, a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization, founded in 1979 and comprised of about 200 businesses to advocate for quality local news and to educate our public on all issues relating to news, here's why EAS fails to provide our more than 2.7 million residents with a reliable means of communication in emergency situations.

First, it's assumed there's someone inhouse to operate EAS. With more and more radio broadcasters using remote operations, having a person on site (especially during the night shift)is now a luxury, not a necessity. Second, EAS assumes if there is someone available to operate the system, that person has been trained and knows how to use it. Given that local radio staffs have been reduced to college interns, it's not fair to the staffer to expect such responsibility to fall within their job function. It's not fair to the public to be reliant on a system with so many built-in assumptions that greatly diminish the chances for EAS to be effective. After 9/11, we discovered that few broadcasters knew they had the system available and those that did were unfamiliar with using it. Continuous turnover within the industry is simply reassurance that such problems will continue to plague the system. Local broadcasters who recognize the importance of EAS throw up their hands in despair over the lack of guidance in how to use such a system effectively, and at least one association has failed to provide any help in answering broadcasters' questions to demystify the process. With Long Island's geography, more than 2.7 million people may have cause to evacuate this Island, should a major hurricane hit this region, as predicted by weather experts. EAS has too many flaws to be considered part of the solution to our problems at hand.