

**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM**

*Approved by the*

**Federal Communications Commission, March 3, 1997**

## Minutes of the State Emergency Communication Committee Meeting

**May 8, 2013**

Present: Terry Spring-KWPX TV; Tom Sharp-Pierce County DEM; Clay Freinwald; Mathew Buck-Sandusky; Jim Pace-Amateur radio; Lowell Kiesow-KPLU; Jim Dalke-Dalke Broadcast Services; Roy Benavente-EMD; Chris Utzinger-EMP; Carrie Gordon-WSP

Phone: Phil Johnson-CPS; Ruth Brownstein-Mason/Thurston; Marlin Jackson-Spokane; Marty Grisham-Tukwila; Dale Kaoes-Skagit County; Ted Buehner-NWS Seattle; Luke Myers-Bellevue; Don White-KCPQ; Dave Holloran-San Juan County; Arthur Willetts-KWDK

Clay Freinwald called the meeting to order and introductions were made. The minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

The state plan revision effort continues. A preliminary draft is being worked on. The FCC has sent out a press release requesting the updating of state monitoring assignments. This is related to what happened in the 2011 national test. The FCC is using the state plans to try and figure out how the alerts propagated during the test. The next meeting of the plan revision committee will be on 5/29. They will be looking at other state plans. There was a discussion of the lack of recognition and direction of the SECC's from the FCC.

A committee of visitors from Nevada visited Washington to see how EAS works in this state. They looked at our AMBER plan and how it is implemented. Nevada is getting ready to go with Mystates or a similar system. They looked at how Mystates is used for more than EAS. They also toured KPLU and the National Weather Service in Seattle.

The SECC still needs input from the cable industry. Lowell will contact the cable reps on the technical committee. The URL for the cable trade group in Washington is: <http://www.broadband4wa.com>

We still need input from the coastal areas. Clay and Ted may be going down there.

Mark Goulard is the new guy in the Seattle FCC office. He has been visiting several stations. He has been especially interested in seeing the FCC Handbook and a copy of the state plan. Note that the FCC has a self-inspection check list. It is available on their web site, [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov).

EAS was not used in the Boston bombing or the aftermath. However, there was some limited use of WEA/CMAS warnings to cell phones. This is all under review.

In old business, the local areas need to update their local plans. Some areas are working on it. Local Emergency Management may not understand how EAS can fit into their operations. It is best to make it as easy as possible with "fill in the blanks" plans. Lewis County has done an excellent job and is willing to share.

The test schedule was discussed. Mark Allen has been in discussions about getting a waiver for the October tsunami warning exercise. October is supposed to be a night test, but the warning exercise is during the day. It turns out there is a provision in Part 11 for running a special test, therefore no waiver is required. This test will be coded as a RMT. If it had been a "live" test using the tsunami EAS code a waiver would have been required, which is a rather complicated process.

Should the SECC be expanded to include WEA (Wireless Emergency Alert), formerly known as CMAS? The concept needs some refining. It has not been so successful so far. The SECC could develop a plan. It might be easier than starting from scratch. This would just be for wireless devices. The committee would need to include the National Weather Service, local entities, carriers, and other stakeholders. As far as the public is concerned, it is all one system anyway. If the system is misused they can opt out of the system. Should this be in the state EAS plan? This should be addressed sooner rather than later. This must be compatible with other warning methods. There were no objections. Comments are welcome on the remailer.

In new business, training of emergency management and broadcasters was discussed. Most broadcasters see EAS as FCC requirement and tests. The public has less doubt about alerts when they are received from more than one source. There seems to be a training vacuum.

The EAS Speakers Bureau was mentioned. Clay will be speaking to the Highland ARC (amateur radio) on 5/25.

How do you get copies of the local plans? There are paper copies in Roy Benavente's office. The committee is looking for some kind of web presence. Possibly it could be part of the WSEM web site.

TV crawls were discussed. It is possible that crawls will be generated from the EAS headers if there is no text sent with an alert. For example, the message part of the alert might be sent as an audio file instead of a text file. Headers can be inaccurate, such as the Snohomish County Evacuation alert. Or, with an AMBER alert, the car license and description could be missing. A TV station's character generator needs to get its input from CAP.

Emergency Operations Centers need to have the capability of monitoring radio and TV broadcasts. They need to know how the alerts and information that they are sending out is being disseminated. Very few EOC's have 24 hour staffing. Many are staffed only in emergencies. It would also be good if 911 call centers also had monitoring capabilities. This should be part of training and best practices.

The revamped Technical Committee is just getting under way. So far Marlin Jackson has been participating. There has also been some participation from Comcast. A representative from Mystates will be invited. The committee is looking at audio editors, hopefully to get some standardization for the different entities involved in originating alerts. Wavepad looks promising. See <http://www.nch.com.au/wavepad/index.html>. They are also looking at how CAP Alerts propagate. The goal is insuring that everybody gets the higher quality CAP messages first. King County is now training on Mystates.

Mark Allen reports from the Washington State Association of Broadcasters that Part 11 of the FCC rules requires local plans. The RMT test schedule does not require a waiver to run a day time RMT during a night time month. WEA alerts to cell phones are not supposed to be used between 10 PM and 7 AM. It is counter-productive to wake everybody up in the middle of the night. The public can opt-out of alerts if they become too disruptive.

The current local plan for the Central Puget Sound local area is dated 2009. If you need a copy, contact Phil Johnson on the remailer.

The next meeting of the SECC will be July 10 at 9:30 AM at Camp Murray.

Terry Spring