Introduction

The mission of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) is to help save lives and property. This version of the Washington State Plan meets the 2018 FCC Report and Order that revised documentation of all state EAS Plans into the Alert Report System (ARS).

This plan is broken down into the following logical tab sections: Plan Overview, State Emergency Coordinating Committee (SECC) Structure, Emergency Message Distribution, Local Emergency Coordinating Committees (LECCs), Amber Alerts, and Additional Resources. The intent of this more structured plan format is to make it easier to follow and find the key information you need, whether you originate emergency public alert and warning messages, or relay those messages.

The design of this plan also permits you to either strictly use the on-line version of this plan, or print out the plan for use in a binder. In addition, the plan allows for easy revision as policies, procedures and technology evolve.

A. Intent and Purpose of the Washington State Public Alert and Warning System Plan

This Washington State Public Alert and Warning System (WA-PAWS) Plan replaces the previous Washington State EAS Plan. The name of the plan has been changed to document its expanded scope, which now includes the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) along with its three dissemination technologies: Emergency Alert System (EAS), Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), and Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM).

The intent and purpose of the Washington State Public Alert and Warning System Plan is threefold:

- To document the statewide adoption of the IPAWS
- To provide alert originators and other public warning stakeholders the necessary information to implement, maintain, and effectively use IPAWS, EAS, WEA, and NWEM
- To meet the requirements of the 2018 FCC Report and Order

National, State, and Local IPAWS: Participation and Priorities

IPAWS is FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through:

- The Emergency Alert System (EAS)
    - Radio & TV Stations, Cable Systems and Satellite providers
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
    - Cellular telephones and other wireless devices
- Non-Weather Emergency Messages
    - NOAA Weather Radio

The Primary purpose of these systems is to deliver Presidential Messages to citizens when other communications systems are not functional and/or in parallel with those systems.

These systems, when not in use for Federal purposes, can be utilized by state and local governments for public warning message distribution. Should the system be in use for state or local public warnings, a Presidential Message shall take priority.

The National Weather Service (NWS) operates NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) whose primary purpose is to deliver weather and flood related public warning messages, and can be utilized to distribute non-weather emergency messages.

Most public warning messages consist of –

- Aural or Verbal information
- Textural information
- A combination of both

Here is an example of various **systems used** to reach the public:

Public information source	Aural Message	Textual Message
Radio Broadcasting	Yes	No (Note 1)
Television Broadcasting	Yes	Yes
Cable TV Systems	Yes	Yes
Satellite TV Providers	Yes	Yes
Wireless Devices	Yes	Yes

Note 1- Often a Text Message is 'read' by an announcer or via automatic text to speech equipment

Public warning messages are distributed from their sources utilizing different methods.

- Digital (Typically distributed via the Internet)
    - Audio or messages containing text, or both, utilizing the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) distributed via IPAWS
        - Presidential or National Messages

- State or Local sources
    - Distribution of these messages are usually terrestrial based, however they could be wireless. (ISP, WISP, LTE, Satellite, Other)

- Analog audio messages only (Typically distributed via broadcast media and cable sources)
    - Another primary means of a Presidential or National Message
        - Presidential messages via Primary Entry Point (PEP) radio stations.
    - A Secondary means for all other state and local alert messages utilizing Point - Multi-Point architecture
        - State initiated messages via the State Relay Network (SRN)
        - Local initiated messages via Local Relay Networks (LRNs)
        - Distribution systems for Analog Messages could be wired or wireless.

It is important to note that analog remains a vital component. All warning message origination levels both via analog and digital distribution systems, must maintain operational status.

All entities licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are required to relay or distribute National Level/Presidential Messages. The design, construction, testing, maintenance, and management for relay/distribution systems are the responsibility of the State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) working with all stakeholders in a cooperative collaborative manner.

The Washington SECC encourages that public alert and warning message distribution be accomplished, where possible, by monitoring and using multiple channels.

EAS participants are not required to relay and/or forward any public warning message initiated by the state or local governmental entities. However, the SECC encourages full participation, especially where potentially life-saving messages are involved. (See Tab B7 - Event Codes and Guidance)

B. Message Delivery and Monitoring

1. Message Sources

Public alert and warning messages are delivered to broadcast and cable systems throughout Washington State using both digital and analog means. Digital sources, such as IPAWS alert origination software, utilize the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) for distribution over public data networks.

2. Message Distribution

Required tests and alert messages originate from a single point and are distributed to each participant via various systems.

3. Monitoring Requirements and Assignments

For detailed information regarding EAS monitoring requirements for broadcasters in each operational area, see Tabs C5A, C5B, and C5C, which are available on the WA-PAWS Plan website. It is the responsibility of each EAS participant to properly configure their EAS equipment to monitor approved sources for their location.

C. Development of Local Structure and Plans

Each Operational Area within Washington State has a Local Emergency Communications Committee (LECC) for the purpose of setting policies and procedures that govern the local use of IPAWS. Tab D1 provides guidelines for LECC's on: group composition, purpose, responsibilities, and plans.

Digital Distribution System

All EAS participants are required to monitor the IPAWS server for CAP (common alerting protocol) formatted messages.

See tab C2 for detailed information

- **National Level Alerts**

  National alerts codes such as EAN or NPT are originated by FEMA at the national level and are coded for national distribution. Local EAS participant's equipment monitoring the IPAWS server will receive this message and shall rebroadcast it.

- **State Level alerts**

  State level alerts are originated by Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD). Alerts are coded for Washington State distribution and are distributed via the IPAWS server. Local EAS participant's equipment monitoring the IPAWS server will receive this message and should rebroadcast it.

- **Local area alerts**

  Local area alerts are originated by entities that have been authorized to originate alerts to the IPAWS server. These alerts are formatted with the applicable FIPS location code (Tab B8) and uploaded for distribution. Local EAS participant's equipment monitoring the IPAWS server will receive this message and should rebroadcast it.

Analog Distribution System for EAS Messages Only

- **National Alerts**

  The President of the United States or other federal authorities may utilize the facilities of the EAS in a national emergency. A national EAS alert comes in the

form of an EMERGENCY ACTION NOTIFICATION (EAN) from the White House distributed via one of the following methods:

1) The Primary Entry Point (PEP) network of Stations: In Washington State the PEP Station is KIRO-AM-710 in Seattle
- Washington EMD forwards EAN messages from KIRO-AM-710 onto the State Relay Network (SRN, 155.475 MHZ)

2) Designated radio affiliates of National Public Radio (NPR)

3) Designated affiliates of the Premiere Satellite System

4) Sirius/XM (via barker channel)

5) Other affiliates designated by FEMA

- **State level alerts**
  State level EAS alerts are transmitted via the State Relay Network (SRN, 155.475 MHZ)
    - See Tabs C4 and C5A for detailed information
- **Local Area alerts**
  Local level alerts can be broadcast via local area relay networks (LRN)
    - See Tabs C5A, C5B and C5C for detailed information

National Weather Service (NWS) Urgent Message Distribution

NOAA/NWS operates NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) stations across the state reaching over 96% of the state's population. NWR transmits weather and other non-weather emergency messages to broadcast stations and cable systems as well as to the general public through (NWR) receivers.

NOAA Weather Radio urgent weather messages use Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME). SAME coding that specifies the impacted area, event duration, and type of weather event. The message is accompanied by the NWR 1050 Hz warning alarm tone followed by an audible message.

NOAA Weather Radio is an 'all-hazards" network warning system. NWS personnel follow procedures found in state and local WA-PAWS plans when either relaying or originating those EAS alerts. Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM) originating from National, State and local authorities will be routed via IPAWS to the respective local NWS forecast offices for redistribution on the appropriate NOAA Weather Radio Stations.

NWS warning messages may also be disseminated as Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) through IPAWS. WEA message examples, most likely to be routed to target or designated warning areas include tornado warnings, flash flood warnings, dust storm warnings, and tsunami warnings.

Note for emergency managers originating NWEM messages through IPAWS: NWEM messages require manual intervention by the respective NWS Office prior to being broadcast.

For more detailed information, see Tab B11.

Amber Alerts

The Washington State AMBER Alert Plan authorizes use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts, (WEA) by the Washington State Patrol to broadcast immediate information about an abducted child. The EAS message information should contain the child's description, suspect and vehicle information. Broadcast media, WEA, and traffic information (DOT) signs help increase overall distribution of this life safety information to assist in the recovery of a child in danger.

The Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) will activate the EAS for an AMBER Alert and is the only agency authorized to do so. EMD shall also send an AMBER Alert ACCESS (A Central Computerized Enforcement Service System) Administrative text message.

The Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system is utilized in Washington for AMBER Alerts ONLY when there is sufficient vehicle information to release over WEA to generate useful and timely tips and leads. At this time, WEA is activated in Washington by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for an AMBER Alert during daytime hours (06:00 AM to 10:00 PM).

See Tab E1 for complete details about the Washington State Amber Alert program and operations.

Local Digital IPAWS Distribution

The state as well as the majority of local alerting authorities disseminates public alerts and warnings through IPAWS using CAP-compliant alert origination software, such as AlertSense, Everbridge, and others. The messages are sent over the Internet to the IPAWS Open Platform for Emergency Networks (IPAWS-OPEN), which authenticates the alert originator before providing the messages to broadcast media, the wireless carriers, or the National Weather Service for dissemination to the target areas as EAS, WEA, and/or NWEM, respectively.

Cable System Distribution

Cable system providers are required to distribute EAS messages to the public per FCC CFR Title 47 Part 11 and the FCC Cable Systems Handbook. Cable systems participate in national level EAS and are required to maintain the ability to interrupt service on all channels with aural and visual messaging.

Cable providers must monitor EAS sources as outlined in the State plan, and must participate in weekly, monthly, and annual test cycles. However, cable providers may not initiate messages directly.

For detailed information regarding cable system responsibility and distribution, refer to Tab C-7.

EAS Testing

The goal of the Washington EAS system is to provide an opportunity for the maximum number of State, Local and NWS entry points to fully test their systems as well as maintain message originator proficiency in transmitting EAS messages.

EAS test messages include the event code Required Monthly Test (RMT), the Required Weekly Test (RWT), and the Demonstration Test (DMO). The RWT and DMO event codes are good for message originator training and proficiency since they are primarily internal and not broadcast by radio, TV or cable systems.

The RMT is initiated by Washington State Emergency Management, the NWS and Local Operational Areas on a rotation in accordance with the Required Monthly Test schedule. Broadcasters and cable operators are to wait for the RMT and relay the RMT within 60 minutes of receipt. The RMT fulfills the FCC goal of fully testing the transmission system from the RMT message originator to broadcasters/cable systems and then the public.

See Tabs B10A and B10B for complete RMT procedures and guidelines including:

- Development of the RMT schedule
- Test scripts and formats
- RMT time length duration and county location coding
- RMT reception and retransmission
- Procedures for RMT failures

Some EAS message originators have technology capable of text to speech for EAS messaging including test messages. See this state plan's Additional Resources for guidance.

State and Local IPAWS Activation Procedures

The state as well as the majority of counties in Washington is authorized to disseminate public alert and warning messages through IPAWS following jurisdictional warning procedures. The nature and extent of the threat will determine whether the state or the local jurisdiction will originate a given alert. The Emergency Management Division's Alert & Warning Center, which is staffed 24/7, has the capability to disseminate alerts and warnings through IPAWS on behalf of local jurisdictions, if requested. It is best practice for alert originators to complement public warnings with additional information through social media.

Guidance for Originators of IPAWS Alerts

IPAWS allows alert originators to define the nature of a threat by use of specific event codes in the header of public warning messages. (See Tab B7 for details) It is recommended that Local Emergency Communications Committees also incorporate pre-planning for the breadth of potential local hazards in the Local IPAWS Operational Area Plans, to include technological hazards, such as incidents in industrial facilities.