

Washington SECC Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM by Chair Ted Buehner. Introductions were made. The previous minutes were approved. The flash flooding in Texas was added to the agenda.

Announcements

There was a dated FCC website link on the WA-PAWS web site. It has been corrected and updated.

The SECC list (TAB B2 in [WA PAWS](#)) has been updated again. The new FEMA Regional Communications Coordinator, Rebecca Dance, introduced herself to the group. She will be the point person if there is a disaster declaration made by FEMA Region 10 (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska) between federal entities and state and local governments. She has left contact info in the chat.

The local National Weather Service Offices used the remailer to keep everybody informed during the recent scheduled weather radio outages while software updates were made in the forecast offices. We have an excellent relationship with the local offices which is not true in other parts of the country.

The tragic flash flooding events in Texas were discussed. Ted wrote [this article](#) that was posted in mynorthwest.com. There needs to be multiple ways to receive warning messages. Similar events have happened here, most recently in December 2007 on the Chehalis River.

What lessons can we learn from what happened in Texas and how can we apply them here? In Texas the threat was well detected, well warned and well disseminated. The warnings were distributed on NOAA weather radio, EAS and WEA. Radio and TV were covering it, even during the early morning hours.

So, why did too many people not get the warning message, or did not pay much attention to it? It has been reported that the kids at camp had their cell phones confiscated so they could concentrate on camp activities. But there still should have been adults that had their smart phones with them. There have also been reports that cell coverage is spotty in that area. There have also been reports that

flooding is common in that area, that there are so many warnings that they are often ignored.

The last big flood event in that area was in 1987. Were there any lessons learned and were they applied? In the 2023 Maui wildfires, when the power went down, the cell system went down, also. People also do not necessarily pay attention to the messages. They expect the government to take care of them. They need to look out for themselves. Many younger people are not listening to the radio anymore. They are glued to their cell phones. When they stop working, they are basically adrift.

There are weather radios available that will wake up for emergency messages and trigger an alarm, including strobe light, siren, pillow shakers for the hearing impaired, etc. Weather radio behaves like a smoke detector, waking up with a warning alarm when an EAS message for that area is received. This is a good system to compliment cell phones because it is silent until it is needed so there is no reason to turn it off, such as overnight. Also, some people turn off the alerts entirely on their phones.

Old Business

Simone is, once again, working on an update to TAB D-2, LECC Chairs and county EMD Officials. There is a lot of turnover so this TAB gets updated frequently.

Mary Jo Margeson is the new AMBER Alert coordinator for the Washington State Patrol. There are no plans to make any changes to the AMBER Alert plan after the recent tragedy in Wenatchee. The alert was handled appropriately. The incident did not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert, so an endangered missing persons advisory was issued instead. There have been calls for changes, but what those changes would be are not clear. There will be a meeting of the AMBER committee soon to review the incident and consider any possible changes.

WEA is used for other types of alerts, such as Silver Alerts, instead of utilizing EAS. They need to have enough detail to be useful. There were complaints about a recent alert, but the missing person was found very quickly. During June, 18 alerts were issued for 18 successful recoveries. Lowell brought up that WEA Alerts are very intrusive, so it is important to not overuse them. People can turn them off, and then they are unreachable for any kind of alert. Mary Jo is aware of this, and very few of the requests she gets actually make it to alert status.

The EAS FAQ was discussed. Lowell opined that EAS is so mature that there are not a lot of questions about it. The real need for a FAQ is on the origination side. And part of the problem with that is the number of different software systems in use around the state. Some of these companies have better support than others.

The Amateur radio plan was discussed. This is to provide backup communication links in emergency situations. It has been posted on the remailer. It was approved and should be posted on the [WA-PAWS](#) website soon.

New Business

The draft RMT schedule for 2026 has been posted on the remailer. There was a question about the date of the January test that was resolved. NORCOM is no longer doing EAS so somebody else will need to do the December test in the Central Puget Sound area. The Columbia Basin folks have reviewed it and are happy with it. If there are any concerns, share them with Roland so he can resolve them. It is expected that the proposed schedule will be voted on and approved at the September meeting.

The last state originated RMT failed. Everbridge could not find a problem on their end. The IPAWS help desk determined that there was a problem with the EAS system. They said it was a fluke and shouldn't happen again. They are supposed to follow up with the state. There have also been some problems with the recent state RWT's. Lowell is assisting with the troubleshooting. He also has technical contacts at IPAWS. As a reminder, RWT's are a great way to test the system because they don't go past the EAS box and only logged.

There is nothing new to report on the SRN.

Committee Reports

Technical: Nothing new to report.

Training: Ted will be adding some tabletop exercises to TAB F-9 in the near future.

Local Area Reports

In the Central Puget Sound local area, Jason is still planning on having a LECC meeting this year.

The Coastal area will have a LECC meeting in September. They are continuing to work on their plan update. They are ready and waiting for the SRN to be reactivated.

In the Columbia Basin, Sean brought up a recent meeting with the state that was about funding for emergency warning systems. In Washington, a lot of Emergency Managers have received grants from Homeland Security to fund their mass notification systems. That grant program is going away. They are looking into having a state-wide system funded by the state, similar to what is done in Oregon. This could be more cost-effective, but it could mean changing to a different IPAWS software system in some areas.

The Cowlitz/Wahkiakum is working on putting together a LECC meeting in September.

The Inland Northwest will be having an in-person LECC meeting on October 23 at KSPS in Spokane. This meeting was originally going to be in September.

In Kittitas County, George Long is fighting fires in Alaska and has nothing new to report.

In Mason/Thurston, nothing to report.

In the North Central area, they are in fire season. They recently met with Chelan, Douglas and Grant Counties to review alerts originated in 2024 and so far in 2025. They have started attaching recorded audio files to alerts instead of using text to speech, resulting in a big improvement. RIVERCOM is facing staffing shortages and has stepped back from issuing EAS tests, deferring them to the county.

In the Okanogan, Charlie helped them install equipment so that their NPR station can now broadcast their alerts. Maurice is in favor of the state going to one unified system to push out alerts.

In Yakima, they will have an LECC meeting on August 19.

Simone would want a unified state-wide system to be optional. Sean said that if your system is working for you, you should be able to keep it. But some jurisdictions are going to have funding issues with the changes that are happening nationally.

Stakeholder Reports

None.

Other Business

None.

The meeting ended at 10:43 AM.

Please share future agenda items with SECC Administration Assistant Scott Sipe at scott.sipe@alphamediausa.com who compiles the agenda.

For information on joining the SECC remailer, go to [this link](#).

The next meeting will be remote on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 9:30 AM PST on Zoom.

CHATBOX

00:37:43Jim House: Good morning. Jim House (he/him) Disability/AFN Integration Manager for the Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning with WA Statewide Independent Living Council jim.house@dshs.wa.gov

00:41:17Jim House: Welcome Rebecca!

00:41:32Rebecca Dance - FEMA R10: Reacted to "Welcome Rebecca!" with ❤️

00:42:16Rebecca Dance - FEMA R10: Rebecca Dance - FEMA R10 Regional Emergency Communication Coordinator rebecca.dance@fema.dhs.gov

00:43:25Ted Buehner - Washington SECC Chair: <https://mynorthwest.com/pacific-northwest-weather/texas-flash-flood/4107422>

00:48:53Sean Davis, Franklin County EM: Sorry I am late, Sean Davis, Franklin County, Columbia Basin Op Area

00:54:35Jim House: I do not know if they use AHAB Outdoor Warning Sirens in this case. I would think this could be one "incomplete" solution. I say "incomplete" because it is audio only - no visual component like strobes that you can see from afar. Washington EMD did pilot a tsunami siren with a visual strobe in Ocean Shores last October. I offered suggestions for improvement and have a report if you are interested. Check out https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/5e20bef357d90e4e47de7965/673670322400bb6c07ec541b_Tsunami%20Alert%20Accessibility%20Evaluation.pdf

00:58:17Jim House: NOAA Weather Radio for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Weather Safety Deaf and Hard of Hearing

00:59:50Simone Ramel-McKay, Spokane County EM: I am here Ted.

01:00:01Jim House: Reacted to "I am here Ted." with 🍌

01:19:36Roland: Just

01:20:08Roland: Just lost audio. Be right back.

01:20:22YVEM Advanced Planning: tied up on phone, yes 6th is Sunday, 8th is on a Tuesday...Tuesday would be better.

01:20:59Tammi Wright-Mason County Emergency Management: January 6 is on a Tuesday in 2026

01:22:04YVEM Advanced Planning: my error....gues I should have had coffe first

01:22:37Sean Davis, Franklin County EM: Thanks Roland, it looks solid for the Columbia Basin Op Area.

01:29:05YVEM Advanced Planning: Yakima nothing to add at this time.

01:32:24Lowell Kiesow: Barry, do you have any contacts at IPAWS?

01:32:43Jason Shirron (King County OEM): We provide the system for 39 cities and it's a support and operations nightmare... I can't imagine scaling that up to the entire state.

01:32:50YVEM Advanced Planning: Our next LECC meeting 8-19-25

01:40:31YVEM Advanced Planning: Yakima nothing to add at this time. Our next LECC meeting 8-19-25

01:40:54YVEM Advanced Planning: will do

01:42:15John Ebner/JCDEM-Logistics: Have lost the main screen. Seems Scott Sipe has paused screen sharing. Can we get the main screen back?

01:42:54dave halloran: San Juan County : Alertsense/Konexus

01:42:59John Ebner/JCDEM-Logistics: Thank you.

2025 SECC MEETING DATES	LOCATION
Tuesday Sept 9	Anticipate SECC Meetings will remain virtual via Zoom until further notice, apart from perhaps a few well-advertised exceptions.
Tuesday Nov 11	

Note –

- The above schedule can be altered by the SECC as needed, particularly if that second Tuesday of the month conflicts with a holiday or other special day.
- The SECC may hold special meetings as required.

To subscribe to the Washington State EAS remailer, follow this [link](#).

SECC Members

POSITION	NAME	PRESENT
Chair	Ted Buehner	X
Vice Chair	Lowell Kiesow	X
Chair Emeritus	Clay Freinwald	
WAEMD Chair	Kevin Wickersham	
WAEMD A&W	Meredith McClurkan	X
WAEMD Multilingual	Lewis Lujan	
NWS	Reid Wolcott	
WEA	Bill Peters	
AMBER Coordinator	Mary Jo Margeson	X
Eastern WA Leaders	Sandi Duffey	X
	Charlie Osgood	X
Data Base Manager	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
FEMA Reg 10	Rebecca Dance	X
Technical Committee	Lowell Kiesow	
Comm Systems Chair		
Cable TV - Comcast	Trevor Nelson	
Administrative Assistant	Scott Sipe	X
Recording Secretary	Terry Spring	
Amateur Radio	Monte Simpson	X
Test Coordinator	Roland Robinson	X
WSAB	Keith Shipman	

LECC Chairs

OPERATIONAL AREA	NAME	PRESENT
Central Puget	Jason Shirron	X
Clallam	Justine Chorley	
Coastal	Pat Anderson	
Columbia Basin	Sean Davis	X
Cowlitz/Wahkiakum	John Mackey Austin Smith Scott Neves	X
Inland N.W.	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
Kittitas	George Long	
Lewis	Erika Katt	
Mason/Thurston	Sonya Kroese	
North Central	Charlie Osgood	X
No. Puget Sound	Dan McDermott Dave Halloran	X
Okanogan	Maurice Goodall John Andrist	X
Yakima	Angela Brown (SunComm) Mike McMullen	X

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

NAME	AFFILIATION	PRESENT
Jim House	Coalition On Inclusive Emergency Planning	X
Barry Mishkind	Arizona SECC	X
Tammi Wright	Mason County EM	X
John Ebner	Jefferson County DEM	X
John Price	Mason/Thurston Co.	X
Deanna Davis	Benton Co. EM	X
Arthur RD Grunbaum	KGHI-KGHE	X
Adina Sellars	Stevens County DEM	X
Conner Crookshank	KBTC-TV	X
Joe Kline	KCTS-Cascade PBS	X
Carri Gordon	Retired	X
Jasmine Rivera		X
Keith Smeal	Bonneville Seattle	X
Joanne Boggs	Pend Oreille Emergency Management	X