



PUBLIC NOTICE

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ENHANCED WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS AVAILABLE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94

By this *Public Notice*, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) reminds authorized alert originators, including state and local governments, that the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system is available as a tool to provide life-saving information to the public during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.¹

In recent years, the Federal Communications Commission, together with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Participating Commercial Mobile Service Providers, have taken important measures to promote the effectiveness of WEA, and to make such messages more accessible.² These enhancements to WEA include: the capability to send more detailed alerts of up to 360 characters for 4G-LTE networks, the option to convey recommended actions for saving lives or property (e.g., a reminder to stay at home due to COVID-19) for use in connection with Imminent Threat Messages, and the ability to send alerts in Spanish language.³

Additional information on Wireless Emergency Alerts is available on the PSHSB website.⁴ In addition, FEMA provides guidance on its website on how authorized alert originators can leverage the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System for emergency alerts regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵

For more information, please visit <https://www.fcc.gov/coronavirus>. For any inquiries, please contact James Wiley, Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-1678 or james.wiley@fcc.gov.

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¹ See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus (COVID-19) (last visited Mar. 30, 2020), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Authorized alert originators are federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial entities authorized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to transmit alerts to the public using the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

² See *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Announces that FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is Ready to Support Certain Improvements to Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)*, Public Notice, PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94, 34 FCC Rcd 12332 (PSHSB 2019); see also 47 CFR § 10.10(f) (defining “Participating Commercial Mobile Service Providers” for the purpose of the WEA rules).

³ See, e.g., 47 CFR §§ 10.430 (expanded character limit); 10.400(d) (a new class of alert messages, “Public Safety Messages”); 10.480 (support for Spanish-language alerts).

⁴ PSHSB, *Wireless Emergency Alerts Enhancement FAQs for Authorized Alert Originators*, <https://www.fcc.gov/file/17662/download> (last visited Mar. 30, 2020).

⁵ FEMA, *IPAWS TIP, TIP #24: COVID-19 When Can You Use IPAWS?*, https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1584564224092-16298bb999ce6440ec36e3ae3d240073/March_2020_IPAWS_Tip.pdf (last visited Mar. 30, 2020).