

Emergency Alert System

Self-Inspection Checklist for Broadcasters and Cable System Operators

General information on airing EAS messages, applicable to all EAS participants.

What tests must I air for my area?

You must air the RWT, the RMT and any national level alerts (header codes of EAN and EAT)

What about all those weather alerts? Must I air them?

You are not required to air any weather information, however, in the interest of serving your listeners/viewers, you should provide them with emergency information - this may be done as an EAS alert, or as an on air message by station personnel, at the discretion of management

For LP-1 and LP-2 stations, if all stations in your local operational area cannot receive the National Weather Service, your local EAS plan should address which weather service alerts stations want sent via the EAS. (Many have agreed that these warnings should be sent via the EAS: flash flood, tornado, severe thunderstorm, and blizzard)

1. EAS Operating Handbook available? (§11.15)

This is a required document and is available from the following sources:

Call the EAS office at 202-418-1220 and request a copy or,

Write the EAS office at: Federal Communications Commission
 Compliance and Information Bureau
 1919 M Street NW, Room 736
 Washington, D.C. 20554
 (EAS office will move to Portals in May 99)
 e-mail: send request to eas@fcc.gov
 Download the document from our website:
 <http://www.fcc.gov/cib/eas/handbook.htm>

2. EAS Encoder/Decoder installed and operational? (§11.35)

EAS unit may be programmed to be in the fully manual or fully automatic mode, or a combination of both modes. Unit must be programmed to transmit/send the Required Weekly Test (RWT), the Required Monthly Test (RMT) and the national level alerts (EAN, EAT) to the state and county for the broadcaster's county of license. Other location codes are optional, however, stations are encouraged to program the unit to transmit for all counties in their local operational area. The LP-1 and LP-2 in the local operational area must program their units for all counties in their local operational area.

3. EAS Decoder tuned to stations in accordance with local/state EAS plans? (§11.52)

Per FCC Rules, all broadcast stations are required to monitor 2 sources. The EAS unit must be able to receive a clear, strong signal or it will not activate. If you cannot receive your assigned monitoring sources adequately, report this to your local and state chairperson, and request a change in your assignment.

The current chairperson contact is:

4. Encoder timing tones 8-25 seconds in length? (§11.32)

In order to conserve airtime, most stations keep the tones set for 8 seconds.

5. Transmit Tests - Is Required Weekly Test, "RWT", conducted weekly? (§11.61)

A week typically runs from Sunday to Saturday. All stations are required to send at least 1 RWT each week. The RWT may be aired on any day, and at any time, as long as the days and times are random. The RWT must include at least the FIPS# of the county of license or cable system county of service. Other FIPS #'s are optional.

General Logging Information

Printouts from EAS units or program log sheets are not a log unless the entries are signed/initialed by the operator - in other words, all logs must be signed. All logs must be reviewed weekly and signed by the chief operator - a review on Thursday is suggested, as this allows for the sending of tests if it has not been done. There must be a written explanation in the log for any tests not received or sent. Stations have an obligation to determine why a test was not sent or received. The EAS printouts do not have to be kept if other logging is used, however stations may want to keep proof of the RWT and RMT.

All tests and alerts received from your 2 required sources must be logged.

6. Transmit Tests: Required Weekly Test, "RWT", logged properly on station log? (§11.61)

Logging consists of a signed entry recording the date, time, and type of activation transmitted/sent. If no test was sent, explain this omission.

7. Receive Tests: Is the Required Weekly Test, "RWT", logged properly on station log? (§11.61)

Logging consists of a signed entry recording the date, time, and type of activation received. If no test was received, explain this omission. All tests and alerts received from your 2 required sources must be logged.

General Required Monthly Test Information:

The schedule for the RMT should be part of, or an appendix to your state plan. Usually the RMT is generated by the LP-1 in your local area. In even numbered months, the RMT is conducted during the evening (between local sunset and 8:30 a.m.). In odd numbered months, the RMT is conducted during the day (between 8:30 a.m. and local sunset).

The RMT should be conducted during a full calendar week in the month, unless the State plan dictates otherwise (this means it should not be aired on a day that part of the week is one month, and part of the week is in another month).

8. Transmit Tests: Required Monthly Test, "RMT", logged properly on station log? (§11.61)

Logging consists of a signed entry recording the date, time, and type of activation transmitted/sent. If no test was sent, explain this omission. (i.e., not for our operational area, station off air, etc.)

9. Transmit Tests: Is the Required Monthly Test, "RMT", conducted within 15 minutes of reception? (§11.61)

The RMT must be transmitted within 15 minutes receipt if it is for counties in your local operational area. This may be done manually or automatically. If the RMT received is from a different local operational area, it should not be retransmitted - the test should be logged, and a note included to explain why it was not retransmitted (RMT not for our local area).

The script of the RMT may not be changed. The digital codes of the RMT must never be changed. The LLLLLLLL code is automatically changed by the EAS encoder upon retransmission of the RMT message. The script is part of the State plan, and must be aired as received. No station call letters should be in the message portion of the text. You are allowed to have your own station personnel record the RMT script if you feel certain on air voices have a high recognition factor.

If a station is off the air when an RMT is received, they are required to air the RMT if the valid time period of the message has not expired. If sign on occurs after the RMT has expired, it does not have to be aired, but your log should reflect why it was not aired. An RWT should be sent if it is not possible to retransmit the RMT.

10. Receive Tests: Required Monthly Test, "RMT", logged properly on station log? (§11.61)

Logging consists of a signed entry recording the date, time, and type of activation received. If no RMT was received, explain this omission. An RWT should be sent if it is not possible to retransmit the RMT. If RMT was not retransmitted, explain this in your log (Not for our local operational area, or county of license, station off the air during time when RMT was valid, etc.).

11. Does the Station Log explain any failures to send or receive RMT and/or RWT?

For any failure to send or receive a test, the log should contain information that explains why the test was not received/sent. The explanation should include notes if your equipment experienced failure, staff omitted the test or is not trained to send tests, or why the sending station did not transmit the test. List name, date and phone number of person contacted. Items that should be explained are:

No RMT received, or RMT not sent within 15 minutes of receipt
No RWT sent for a calendar week
No RWT received from either source for a calendar week.

12. Does the station log contain data and time for EAS equipment outages?

If EAS equipment fails, note date and time in the log. If the equipment must be sent in for repairs, note day sent, when it is expected to be returned and detail any action taken to get a replacement unit or to obtain EAS messages from another source. Proper logging of equipment failures may prevent enforcement action for missed tests.

Items Applicable for cable systems only:

13. RMT - Is the visual message of the RMT on all channels that carry programming?

The visual message must include the originator, event, location(s) and valid time period of RMT. Programmed channels do not include channels used for the transmission of data, such as interactive video games. The video message must be on all channels, this includes pay-per-view and premium channels.

14. RMT - Is the EAS audio message transmitted on all channels that carry programming?

The audio message must include the EAS header codes, Attention Signal, emergency message, and End of Message using EAS Protocol. Programmed channels do not include channels used for the transmission of data, such as interactive video games. The audio message must be on all channels, this includes pay-per-view and premium channels.

15. RWT - Is the RWT on all channels that carry programming?

There is no requirement for a video message when the RWT is transmitted on a cable system.