

## Notes and Best Practices from June 9 FEMA Virtual Roundtable

### Session 1 Notes & Best Practices AM, FM, Digital Radio

What are the major technical issues facing the EAS today:

Improper equipment installation and configuration will be addressed through outreach.

Training for EAS device operators on proper setup. IPAWS looking to communities of interest for support in getting information out to broadcast engineers/operators.

So many NWS alerts that stations are overwhelmed - some do not get aired.

Updating State EAS Plans:

Who do State's get help from with preparing/updating Plans?

Should involve local SBE Chapters (or similar organizations) for assistance.

In Alaska, partnership with state government, ABA and local communication organizations has been successful. Utilizing live-code tests has boosted interaction with partnership who meet regularly to discuss issues.

Hesitation on local level to activate alerts may be related to lack of criteria that would tell emergency managers when to send an alert. Increased education is needed. State and local emergency managers should be involved with updating plans and decision-making processes regarding the EAS.

How to improve monitoring?

Set guidelines addressing better antenna and wiring since it is often overlooked.

Broadcast engineers need to be proactive. Make sure you can monitor stations assigned. If not, determine which you can monitor and inform appropriate point of contact.

Audio Quality:

How would you improve audio quality at station level?

Broadcasters need to treat the EAS device like they do any other device in their station. Attention to proper wiring and audio configurations.

Live tests allow operators to assess audio quality.

Technical best-practices to EAS community will include recommendations.

Receivers of federal grant money should be required to invest monies into their EAS.

What technical training activities should be performed in preparation for the National Test?

Outreach should start with the companies/organizations and then be pushed down. The National Test will emphasize EAS importance to corporate heads. The right people need to be responsible for EAS at stations.

State and local authorities can seek help and guidance from industry-related organizations.

Notifying/engaging the public:

Unfortunately there isn't much outreach to the public regarding EAS. Stations should take the opportunity to discuss/promote the EAS via weekly/monthly tests.

EAS Rules/Handbook:

Are the Handbooks used/read? Looked at but not used daily because it's not an evolving document. The Handbook should include information regarding vendor products. The FCC Rulemaking solicits comments. To file electronically: [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) (navigate to electronic filing)

This national test- the EAN isn't how it works with the current Handbook.

In talking about cooperation with the EMs, it helps to note that broadcasters have dealt with the repeated errors for 14 years, while the EM staffers seem to change regularly. Sort of like an accidental discharge of a gun, one mistake can be forgiven easily .. but when the gun goes off regularly over 14 years, how can it be fixed? As a recent example - in one state in the west, when a broadcaster questioned the repeated errors, the EM person involved admitted she was showing the EAS gear to a new supervisor when she "inadvertantly" set off an alert. As the discussion continued to try to explain the frustrations between stations and EMs, the EM gal simply unsubbed ... and another posted "we don't want to hear about what we are doing wrong" ... essentially saying "we are doing you a favor" ...

## Session 2 Notes & Best Practices Digital Television, Cable, and Satellite

What are the Major technical issues effecting the EAS?

Vast variety of media output today. Implementation of IPAWS will enable more alerting pathways to reach more of the public.

Ensuring that all stations have proper devices/firmware/software. Increased interaction with vendors expected before the National Test.

Viewers watching cable receive weather warnings from areas miles away. There is technology that allows target messaging. This includes selective overriding.

How can we get emergency managers to see the benefit of the EAS and conducting tests? Open up dialogue between broadcasters, emergency managers and authorities to build a partnership.

Suggestions to update/implement state EAS plans:

Roundtable sessions at the state level. EAS Plans reviewed and updated each year.

How to improve EAS text crawl?

Technology available that provides text without scrolling. Suggestions may be submitted in response to FCC Rulemaking.

Subchannels:

Equipment typically supplied to stations is from different vendors. Biggest problem is integration with the ENDECs.

Another source for National Test/EAN can be Sirius/XM, with a receiver/subscription

Training:

Specific webinars are needed for broad-based training. Web-based training that is user-driven. How the equipment works because how travel works we need more virtual activities

IPAWS Demonstration and Test Center is available for sandbox testing.

Hot-topics webinar- workshops at a Cable Tech Expo.

SCTE has many on-demand courses they are hoping to roll out.

Leverage Community Emergency Response Training- CERT Training

Educating the Public:

National EAS Test- the public needs to know this is a test beforehand at a higher level so the public

One Page Notices for the National Test for the Customer bills

Public Awareness of the EAS and Public Awareness of the National EAS Test- NAB thinks there needs to be considerations on both sides- we might causing undue concern to the public.

#### Station Ownership and Management

Budget issues is a constraint with doing public awareness within the station-level

#### EAS Handbook

Putting together some notices: EAS Test Guidebook and Instruction Guide.

EAS part of any SBE certification? There are EAS level questions on tests for broadcaster certifications.

Handbooks and pocket guides- Get information shared and things online to make information interactive.

The role and function of State and local committees.