

# The National Emergency Alert System (EAS) Test

November 9, 2011

2:00 pm EDT and 1:00 pm CDT



## Frequently Asked Questions: Nationwide Emergency Alert System Test

The first nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System, or EAS, will take place at 2:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on November 9, 2011. The purpose of the test is to assess the reliability and effectiveness of the system in alerting the public.

**What is the Emergency Alert System (EAS)?** The National-level EAS is a national public alert and warning system that enables the President of the United States to address the American public during extreme emergencies. Alerting authorities can leverage the State and local EAS to send alerts and warnings to radio and television stations, cable television, satellite radio and television services and wireline providers.

**What is the Nationwide Emergency Alert System (EAS) Test?** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA,) in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will send an EAS test message to all participating radio, television, cable, and satellite providers.

**What Can I Expect to Hear/See?** The Test may look like regular, local EAS tests that most people are already familiar with, but there will be some differences in what viewers will see and hear. The audio message will repeat "This is a test." The video message scroll may not indicate "This is a test." The message will last for approximately three minutes and then regular programming will resume.

**Where Will I Hear/See the Test?** On all participating radio, television, cable, and satellite providers (who are called EAS Participants).

**When Will the Test Occur?** November 9, 2011 at 2:00 PM (Eastern). The 2:00 PM (Eastern) time was selected to make sure the Test can occur during normal business hours across many time zones.

**Will the test involve mobile communications devices?** No. The test will involve only those communications service providers – broadcast radio and television, cable television, satellite radio and television and wireline video services – that participate in the EAS.

### **Why do we need a nationwide test?**

Although local and state components of the EAS are tested on a weekly and monthly basis, there has never been an end-to-end nationwide test of the system. We need to know that the system will work as intended should public safety officials ever need to send an alert or warning to a large region of the United States. Only a complete, top-down test of the EAS can provide an appropriate diagnosis of the system's performance.

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