

State of Maine
Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
Guidelines for County Access to IPAWS Portal
Maine Emergency Management Agency
January 2019

The following guidelines outline the steps for a County to be granted access to the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). Be sure to read the [State of Maine Alert and Warnings Policy](#) prior to applying.

Counties wishing to create a COG (FEMA's definition of a Collaborative Operating Group) and gain access to the IPAWS system should review the information and follow the application process outlined at:

IPAWS home page: <https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system>

Direct link to application: <http://www.fema.gov/how-sign-ipaws>

- Counties must complete all federal requirements for IPAWS access (application, IS-247a, MOU etc.) and have access/license to originating alerting system (software and/or hardware) in place. County makes application directly to FEMA.

MEMA, as approving authority for the State of Maine for new COG applications, has added the following restriction:

- **Counties will NOT be granted access to the Emergency Alert System (EAS).** MEMA will approve ONLY CMAS/WEA (cell-phone alerting) and NWEM (non-weather emergency messages) which will trigger NOAA weather radio) applications. NWEM applications must also be approved by NWS who will consult with MEMA before approval.

NOTE: When making application, Counties should be sure to designate "Civil Emergency Message" among the chosen event codes. CEM covers almost any type of local emergency.

MEMA is also adding the following in-state requirements:

1. Completion of IS-251, IPAWS for Alerting Authorities. (A list of webinars at <https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system> offer further sources of training and information.) Both IS-247a (federal requirement) and S-251 should be completed by all personnel who will approve or initiate alerts.
2. County must file an alerting plan (or EOP annex) which MEMA will review and accept before approving a COG application.
 - Plan should be a comprehensive alerting plan including the use of IPAWS
 - Plan should include:
 - All methods of alerting the public, by hazard as appropriate
 - Methods of validating information to be included in an alert
 - Method of obtaining approval for alert messages
 - Proof of completion of training from software vendor
 - IPAWS section must contain:
 - Plan to educate the public on the alerts.
 - Software/hardware platform being used; (Onsolve - CodeRED)

- Onsolve - CodeRED is the standard software platform
 - If other software providers are warranted, they must be an approved and tested vendor with FEMA IPAWS
 - If a County wishes to change vendors, the County must:
 - Notify FEMA
 - Notify the State of Maine
 - Update their County Plan
 - Notify their working group
 - Designation of those authorized to issue alert
 - Currently Director and Deputy Director only
 - Procedures / decision tree for issuing alert
 - Where alert recipients will be instructed to receive additional information
 - Procedures for disseminating the additional alert information in advance of or simultaneously with the alert.
 - Local radio stations?
 - 211?
 - Other dissemination points?
 - Training plan for alert issuers [include IS-247a; IS-251, etc.
 - Exercise / testing plan]
- 3. County must consult with neighboring County EMAs which could be impacted by the plan.
- 4. Future updates to plan must be filed with MEMA.
- 5. Failure to notify the State of the above conditions may cause the State to follow the approved and recommended actions by FEMA:
 - Request in the future that before any changes are made, the County must inform the State of Maine any intention of changing an approved plan
 - Suspend the County's permission to initiate an alert until corrections are made to satisfy the State Plan
 - Request reimbursement from the County the cost of providing Onsolve (CodeRED) alerting to this County as the preferred and accepted vendor
 - Terminate the County's license
 - Place the County on probation and have them conduct a drill to validate their plan

Tests and Actual Alerts:

- Actual alerts must be reported to MEMA [technically will be monitored through IPAWS, but there should be a separate pathway]
- Tests and actual alerts should also be pre-approved by the State and should also be analyzed locally for effectiveness and elements to be improved; at least during pilot period, AARs should be shared with State
- MEMA may request to observe a drill before granting IPAWS access