

Maine

IPAWS State Policy



2022

This page left blank intentionally

Table of Contents

Document Revision Process	4
Revision Record	4
Purpose.....	5
Background.....	5
What are Public Alerts & Warnings	6
Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
IPAWS Administrator: Steven.Mallory@Maine.Gov	8
Guidelines for Issuing Public Alert & Warnings	8
Training.....	11
Acceptable Use.....	11
Non-Weather Emergency Message Guidelines	14
Delivery of Messages to Special and Non-English-Speaking Populations	19
Alert Authorization.....	20
Alert Decision Making.....	20
System Use Not Permitted	21
Effective Messaging.....	21
Cross-Border / Neighboring Jurisdiction Notification	22
Erroneous or False Alert Procedures.....	22
System Management.....	23
System Security.....	23
IPAWS Application Process	24
ACRONYMS	26

Purpose

This policy governs the use of Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and the processes and procedures for issuing alerts and warnings in the State of Maine. This policy is designed to help ensure that the citizens and visitors of Maine are notified of life-threatening situations in as timely and accurate manner as possible. The State of Maine has an IPAWS administrator, currently the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), who establishes what codes alerting authorities are permitted to use, approves Collaborative Operating Groups (COG) for certification, and approves testing procedures and events for IPAWS and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) broadcast testing.

Each COG/agency approved by the State IPAWS Administrator, is an alerting authority authorized to use the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) IPAWS platform for emergency notifications.

Background

MEMA provides IPAWS alerting software to approved COGs. Each approved COG has the ability to issue alerts using IPAWS by use of agency purchased FEMA approved software. IPAWS is an emergency alerting tool, maintained by FEMA, that can be used by local authorities for sending local emergency alerts. IPAWS is a key element of Maine's plan for public warnings. IPAWS software is provided at no cost to COGs statewide. Any COG considering utilizing non-state provide software must notify Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and submit an amended IPAWS plan for approval prior to software implementation. IPAWS is a "system of systems" that can use the following additional alerting dissemination channels:

Note: Each COG is assigned one Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code, for Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM), Emergency Alert System (EAS) and WEA activations. The alert will be disseminated to the entire county or an area selected using IPAWS software. Alerting authorities should consider the following when composing and issuing alerts:

- The EAS alert through broadcast radio and television stations in the area. The alerts may or may not be automatically broadcasted from a local alerting authority depending on the alerting preferences set by the broadcaster as identified in the Maine Emergency Alerts (EAS) Plan.
- The WEA broadcasts a text alert to all WEA capable cell phones within the designated alerting area. WEAs are very brief messages, limited to 90 characters for non-Smartphone devices and 360 characters for Smartphone devices (May 2019). These messages are broadcast from cellular towers in the area that have been designated by the alerting agency. WEAs are not text messages, they are broadcast messages, one-way communication from cellular towers to phones

affiliated with those towers. The targeted area may not completely match a polygon or selected area selected through the alerting software mapping interface.

- NOAA All-Hazard Weather Radio non-weather emergency messages (NWEM) activate tone alert weather radios in an area. NWEMs are alerts that are broadcast through the National Weather Service (NWS) using the NOAA All-Hazards Radio Network services.
- Internet Services such as smartphone apps and social media sites that will relay alerts to those who subscribe.
- COG to COG: COGs are local alerting authorities. Messages from COG to COG are currently only delivered to the COG's software and not sent to an email address or a mobile device such as a text or call. COGs need to be signed in and monitoring their software to receive a COG to COG alert.
- Along with other local alerting systems include but are not limited to an Emergency Telephone Network (ETN), sirens and digital signage.

What are Public Alerts & Warnings

A public **alert** is a communication intended to attract public attention to an unusual situation and motivate individual awareness. The measure of an effective alert message is the extent to which the intended audience becomes attentive and searches for additional information.

A public **warning** is a communication intended to persuade members of the public to take one or more protective actions in order to reduce losses or harm. The measure of an effective public warning message is the extent to which the intended audience receives the message and takes the protective action and/or heeds the guidance.

Roles and Responsibilities

State

Recognizing that all disasters are local, the primary responsibility of the state is to facilitate the implementation of IPAWS into the emergency notification network. In the case of a catastrophic local, state, or regionally defined event, the state will provide a resilient and comprehensive alert and notification capability.

- The State IPAWS Administrator will designate the COG point of contact as per the signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with FEMA.
- MEMA will be the primary alerting agency statewide unless jurisdictions have been authorized by the Maine IPAWS Administrator.

- MEMA will form a working group comprised of applicable statewide stakeholders to bring together the necessary technical and operational expertise from the private sector, non-profit organizations, local jurisdictions, tribal, state agencies, appropriate Canadian entities, and the federal government with the goal of defining policy and procedures leading to the implementation of IPAWS across the state. The working group should be comprised of, but not limited to, the following agencies:
 - MEMA
 - Maine Association of Broadcasters and Maine Public Broadcasters Network (MPBN)
 - National Weather Service (NWS) Local Weather Forecast Office
 - Representatives from Commercial Mobile Service Providers (CMSP)
 - Representatives from local emergency management offices
 - Representative from the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC)

The State IPAWS Administrator will review and approve, as deemed necessary, applications for COGs for all local, county, tribal and State Agencies in accordance with MEMA guidelines.

Local

All disasters and emergencies are locally oriented. While first responders are preparing to respond to the initial after-effects of an incident, it is an inherent responsibility of local officials to keep the public informed of what actions the public needs to take to protect themselves. Communicating these instructions to the public is the primary purpose of IPAWS. Because local officials have a better understanding of the situation, the immediate actions that are being taken, and potential adverse impacts of the incident, it is incumbent upon these officials to rapidly and effectively communicate to the public what is going on and what needs to be done.

In order to successfully accomplish this task, local jurisdictions must have a structure in place to provide for rapid alerts and warnings. Many of the tasks leading to this structure will include:

- Submitting to the state a request/plan that identifies emergency notification providers/systems for inclusion into the IPAWS network.
- Designating in writing, in accordance with jurisdictional procedures, no fewer than two individuals as identified in their IPAWS Plan who will be the jurisdiction's alerting authorities for issuing emergency broadcasts with IPAWS following their successful completion of *IS-247.A* "Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)" course.
- Incorporating IPAWS into existing and future response plans and procedures as well as training and exercise events.

Each established COG will maintain a list of all individuals who have successfully completed FEMA's IPAWS *IS-247.A* course and other required courses as directed by

federal and state guidance. This list will contain copies of completed course certificates, individual names/contact information, and copies of memorandum/resolutions officially designating these individuals as alerting authorities.

COG-level permissions are detailed in the application for IPAWS Public Alerting Authority and describe the geographic boundaries for alerting, the types of alerts that can be issued, the alert approval process and the dissemination systems that can be used to distribute such alerts. COG-level permissions help to define the area of responsibility and the capabilities the alerting authority has.

Immediately after broadcast, a copy of the alert must be emailed to the MEMA IPAWS Administrator and the MEMA Duty Officer as a matter of situational awareness.

IPAWS Administrator: Steven.Mallory@Maine.Gov

State Duty Officer: COMM.EOC@Maine.Gov

Guidelines for Issuing Public Alerts & Warnings

Events/incidents can evolve in extreme ways. Alerts and warnings need to be an integral component of a jurisdiction's response to those events. Issuing public alerts and warnings requires the exercise of reasonable and well-informed judgment. This action must be well practiced and familiar to the initiator.

There is no all-encompassing formula for making warning decisions. There are, however, some evidence-based principles and best practices that can help guide the decision maker:

- Incomplete or imperfect information is not a valid reason to delay or avoid issuing a warning. Time is of the essence, as recipients of warnings will need time to consider, plan, and act after they receive a warning message. This is particularly true among individuals with disabilities and people with access and functional needs. They may require additional time to evacuate or may be at increased risk of harm without notification.
- Utilization of alerting mechanisms within the IPAWS should be a primary route to issue alerts and warnings to ensure the greatest number of recipients within the impacted area are being alerted.
- The responsibility for issuing alerts and warnings during an emergency rests with designated public officials authorized by the State IPAWS Administrator.
- Messages should come from an authoritative source and clearly identify the originating agency. Messages originating from an anonymous or unfamiliar source will be treated with skepticism by the public. Whenever possible, the Alerting Originator should be recognized by the target audience as knowledgeable on the threat.

The following guidelines outline the steps for counties to be granted access to the IPAWS.

Counties wishing to create a COG and gain access to IPAWS 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>

- The County must complete all federal requirements for IPAWS access (application, IS-247a, IS-251, Memorandum of Understanding and all State required forms [contact SWIC]) and have access/license to originating alerting system (approved software and/or hardware) in place. The County makes application directly to the SWIC.

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 WEA (cell-phone alerting).

NOTE: The State of Maine allows for the use of three IPAWS alert codes and one testing code. Local alerts are limited to **Civil Emergency (CEM), Evacuate Immediately (EVI) and Shelter in Place (SPW)**, however MEMA has the capabilities to issue all alerts. CEM covers almost any type of local emergency.

MEMA also adds the following in-state requirements:

1. The applicant County must file an alerting plan (or Emergency Operations Plan [EOP] annex) which MEMA will review and accept before approving a COG application.
 - a. The Alerting Plan should be comprehensive to include the use of IPAWS and should also include:
 - i. All available methods of alerting the public, by hazard as appropriate
 - ii. Methods of validating information to be included in an alert
 - iii. Method of obtaining approval for alert messages
 - iv. Proof of completion of training from approved software vendor and FEMA
 - b. The IPAWS section must contain:
 - i. Plan to educate the public on the alerts
 - ii. Approved software/hardware platform being used; (Onsolve™ - CodeRED™)
 1. Onsolve™ - CodeRED™ is the standard software platform used by MEMA and offered to locals at no expense

2. If other software providers are warranted, they must be an approved and tested vendor with FEMA IPAWS
2. If a County wishes to change alerting software vendors, the County must:
 - a. Notify FEMA IPAWS of the change
 - b. Notify the State of Maine
 - c. Update their County Plan
 - d. Notify their working group
 - e. Complete a successful test of approved software/hardware
3. Designation of those authorized to issue alert
 - a. Currently Director and Deputy Director only
 - b. Procedures/decision tree for issuing alert
 - c. Where alert recipients will be instructed to receive additional information
 - d. Procedures for disseminating the additional alert information in advance of or simultaneously with the alert
 - i. Local radio stations?
 - ii. 211?
 - iii. Social media platforms?
 - iv. Website?
 - v. Other dissemination points?
 - vi. Training plan for alert issuers (including IS-247a, IS-251, in-person or online training)
 - vii. Proficiency in exercising plan
 - viii. Proficiency in testing plan
4. The applicant County must consult with neighboring County EMAs which could be impacted by the plan.
5. Future updates to the plan must be filed with MEMA.
6. Failure to notify MEMA of the above conditions may cause MEMA to follow the approved and FEMA recommended actions:
 - a. Request in the future that before any changes are made, the County must inform MEMA of any intention of changing an approved plan
 - b. Suspend the County's permission to initiate an alert until corrections are made to satisfy MEMA
 - c. Request reimbursement from the County for the cost of providing Onsolve™ (CodeRED™) alerting to this County as MEMA's preferred and accepted vendor
 - d. Terminate the County's license
 - e. 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 the Maine IPAWS Administrator as soon as possible via phone call and email (if available).
- Tests must be pre-approved by MEMA and should also be analyzed locally for effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. After Action Reports (AARs) for

IPAWS test must be completed and an electronic copy of the report must be sent to the MEMA IPAWS Administrator.

- MEMA may request to observe a drill before granting IPAWS access.

Training

Any member of a COG/Agency whose duties include disseminating an IPAWS alert must complete FEMA Independent Studies course IS-0247.B and IS-0251.A (or the most current IPAWS classes). Each COG/Agency is responsible for ensuring and documenting that their employees are properly trained, and all certifications are current. Each COG/Agency should maintain copies of such training and certifications at the COG/Agency for review as required.

Acceptable Use

Warnings should be issued when there is an imminent threat to life, health, or property. This can include alerts and warnings issued in advance of forecasted severe weather events when doing so will give the public time to evacuate. When a threat exists, even though it might not be imminent, such as a hurricane or flooding, it is advised to communicate that threat out to the public so that they may be better prepared. Warning systems, such as sirens, while helpful in alerting a community of a hazard, should not be used for reassuring the public that an ongoing situation or an upcoming event is not hazardous; other public information channels should be used for those purposes instead.

Irrelevant and/or redundant warnings can fatigue the public rapidly and lead to recipients discounting further warning messages or opting out of receiving future alerts and warnings. Every effort should be made, within the capabilities of the warning system(s), to limit the warning to people who are actually at risk. Warning systems become more effective to the extent they can target limited areas or specific at-risk populations.

Alert Activations

Each COG/Agency should identify a plan for issuing alerts in their jurisdiction/area of responsibility in the event their primary method of issuing alerts and warnings is inoperable or unavailable. MEMA will serve as the alternate alerting agency. It is the responsibility of the COG/Agency to notify the MEMA IPAWS Administrator via phone at **207-624-4400** immediately upon realization that the COG/Agency's alerting capabilities are unavailable.

Methods and Technologies

A successful alert and warning program is one which incorporates multiple methods and technologies to accomplish the goal of reaching the largest percentage of the target population. In selecting specific methods and technologies that will be most effective for

the jurisdiction’s demographic, cultural, and geographical area, alerting agencies should consider:

- Mobile phone usage rate of target population
- Community’s adoption of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) vs traditional landline
- Generational usage of text vs email
- Individuals with access and functional needs (i.e. people with disabilities, seniors, children, limited English proficiency)

Community Alerting

Many agencies have multiple notification/alerting systems that can be used to deliver information, both emergency and non-emergency, to their communities. These systems include, but are not limited to, reverse 9-1-1, social media, and local radio and access TV stations. Careful consideration should be taken to ensure that non-emergency information is **NOT** sent over IPAWS/EAS systems. However, sending emergency messages over multiple systems is more effective than sending them over a single system.

When sending a community message/alert, specify what the message type is and consider the message delivery methods available (i.e. no parking notifications, road closures, other community information). See the chart below to assist with making the determination level.



IPAWS is an internet-based tool governed by FEMA, which federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities (SLTT) can use to issue critical public alerts and warnings. The three core components of IPAWS are EAS, WEA, and the NOAA Weather Radio. IPAWS also includes capabilities for unique alert systems, which includes dissemination of alerts through third party applications, and future system development.

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

The federal EAS is used by alerting authorities to send warnings via broadcast television or radio, cable, satellite, and wireline communications pathways. EAS can be used by local authorities in accordance with a pre-determined and approved local EAS plan to alert their local jurisdictions of an imminent threat. Additionally, EAS enables the President to interrupt all broadcasts in any location with an emergency announcement. Participation in local use of EAS is voluntary on the part of broadcasters, except the Local Primary LP-1 and LP-2 stations. EAS messages are delivered to all listeners or viewers of stations serving a targeted county. Satellite and cable TV carriers also participate in EAS, but their capacity to geographically target dissemination is more limited. EAS can distribute warning messages over large areas very quickly but cannot reach people who are not watching or listening to broadcast media, particularly people who are asleep.

Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)

WEAs are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through the major mobile carriers. WEA alerts are targeted to a defined geographical area and are presented differently than a typical text alert in order to differentiate it from regular notifications. They offer a unique alert tone and vibration accompanied by a brief push notification displayed on the end user's mobile device. Mobile device users will receive the WEA notification unless they choose to deactivate the service on their mobile device, which is discouraged. The only alert that cannot be deactivated on a user's mobile device is the Presidential alerts.

WEA has the capability of notifying WEA-enabled cell phones within a selected geographic area, whether they have previously signed up or opted-in or not. This capability allows for both the residents of a given jurisdiction, and persons visiting the jurisdiction the ability to be notified.

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio

Using technology similar to old-fashioned portable radio pagers, desktop radio receivers can be activated when they receive particular tone or data signals. The alerting signal is typically followed by audio information. The nationwide National Weather Radio network operated by the NOAA is the best known and most widely deployed example of this technology. Tone alert radios can provide both alerting and warning detail quickly over a wide area but require an investment in the receiving equipment that many members of the public decline to make. Some NOAA Radios have Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) capability allowing public agencies or jurisdictions to limit warnings only in an area of concern.

Social Media

Social media has become a critical component to disseminating emergency messaging, instructions, and recovery information to both the media and the public. Due to its unique nature, it functions instantaneously and creates the appearance of highly official two-way dialogue between the agency and very large groups of people, including news media and stakeholders. Messaging for social media must be very carefully managed. It has the capability to deliver text, audio, video, images, infographics, maps, and other data and requires a skill set of regular use. These platforms have inherent expectations for two-way engagement and therefore demand more staff time and resources.

Social media is more successful when the community is engaged and aware of accounts prior to a disaster. Social platforms may include:

- Social networking
- Image sharing and messaging
- Video sharing
- Social blogging
- Social community

Considerations for incorporating social media into alerts and warnings before, during, and after emergencies include:

- Social media audience such as viewers, listeners, and followers.
- Social media outreach is highly dependent on working cellular and data networks that may be impaired or down during and following an emergency.
- Consider the variety of languages and the complexity of language for posting.
- Social media is highly effective at reaching the news media, which may assist in more broadly sharing messaging.
- Briefings and updates via live and recorded video are recommended when internet access and bandwidth allow.
- Allow public comments to be posted and seen. Two-way engagement is expected by the public and dedicated staff resources are necessary to facilitate it.
- Be aware that social media usage varies widely among different social, economic, and demographic groups. Information gleaned from social media analysis may not reflect a balanced or complete picture.
- Ensure messaging is consistent across all alerting platforms.

Non-Weather Emergency Message Guidelines

IPAWS Activation

The effectiveness of IPAWS relies heavily on the appropriate use of the system by alerting authorities. Overuse of the system diminishes the effectiveness of IPAWS as citizens are more likely to ignore or opt-out of receiving notifications if they receive too

many alerts. Misuse of the system when there is not an immediate threat, reduces the credibility of IPAWS alerts. The State of Maine has an IPAWS administrator who establishes what alerting codes authorities are authorized to use. MEMA will provide a backup capability for approved local IPAWS alerting authorities to issue emergency broadcasts on behalf of the local jurisdiction.

TESTING

MEMA will conduct coordinated periodic tests of the system to ensure functionality of equipment and the network in conjunction with appropriate MEMA guidelines.

The State of Maine allows for the use three IPAWS alert codes and one testing code. Local alerts are limited to CEM, EVI, and SPW, however the State IPAWS Administrator has the capabilities to issue all alerts.

ADR – Administrative Message

A non-emergency message providing updated information about an event in progress, an event that has expired or concluded early, pre-event preparation or mitigation activities, post-event recovery operations, or other administrative matters pertaining to the EAS. **(EAS & NWEM only)**

AVW - Avalanche Warning

Conditions are imminent or occurring.

AVA – Avalanche Watch

Conditions are favorable or expected but not imminent or occurring. The purpose of an Avalanche Watch is to warn the public that Avalanche Warning criteria are likely to be met within 24-28 hours.

BLU - Law Enforcement Warning (Pending 2022)

A message issued by state and local authorities to warn the public when there is actionable information, related to a law enforcement officer who is missing, seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, or when there is an imminent credible threat to an officer. A Blue Alert could quickly warn the public if a violent suspect may be in your community, along with providing instructions on what to do if the suspect is spotted and how to stay safe.

CAE – Child Abduction Emergency

An emergency message, based on established criteria, about a missing child believed to be abducted. Note, the agency/organization establishing the criteria varies by jurisdiction, but most criteria loosely follow those of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The law enforcement agency investigating the abduction will describe the missing child, provide a description of the suspect and/or vehicle, and ask the public to notify the requesting agency, or dial 9-1-1, if they have any information on the whereabouts of the child or suspect.

CDW - Civil Danger Warning:

A warning of an event that presents a danger to a significant civilian population. The CDW, which usually warns of a specific hazard and gives specific protective action, has a higher priority than the Local Area Emergency (LAE) Examples include contaminated water supply and imminent or in-progress military or terrorist attack. Public protective actions could include evacuation, shelter in place, or other actions (such as boiling contaminated water or seeking medical treatment).

CEM - Civil Emergency Message:

An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE), but the hazard is less specific than the Civil Danger Warning (CDW). For example, the CEM could be used to describe a change in Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat

DMO – Practice/Demo Warning

A demonstration or test message used for particular purposes as established in state, local, tribal, or territorial EAS plans. Purposes may include testing of a siren system or audio quality checks.

EQW - Earthquake Warning

A warning of current or imminent earthquake activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.

EVI - Evacuation Immediate:

A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local, tribal, or territorial ordinances. As an example, authorized officials may recommend the evacuation of affected areas due to an approaching tropical cyclone. In the event a flammable or explosive gas is released, authorized officials may recommend evacuation of designated areas where casualties or property damage from a vapor cloud explosion or fire may occur.

FRW - Fire Warning

A warning of a spreading wildfire or structure fire that threatens a populated area. Evacuation of areas in the fire's path may be recommended by authorized officials according to state law or local ordinances.

HMW - Hazardous Materials Warning

A warning of the release of a non-radioactive hazardous material (such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent) that may recommend evacuation (for an explosion, fire or oil spill hazard) or shelter-in-place (for a toxic fume hazard).

LEW – Local Area Emergency

A warning of a bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event (e.g. a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate or deny access to affected areas, and arrest violators or suspicious persons.

LAE - Local Area Emergency

An emergency message that defines an event that, by itself, does not pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials. Examples include a disruption in water, electric or natural gas service, or a potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.

NUW - Nuclear Power Plant Warning

A warning of an event at a nuclear power plant classified as a Site Area Emergency or General Emergency by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). A Site Area Emergency is confined to the plant site; no off-site impact is expected. Typically, a General Emergency is confined to an area less than a 10-mile radius around the plant. Authorized officials may recommend evacuation or medical treatment of exposed persons in nearby areas.

TOE - 911 Telephone Outage Emergency

An emergency message that defines a local or state 9-1-1 telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange. Authorized officials should provide alternative phone numbers with which to reach 9-1-1 or dispatch personnel.

RHW - Radiological Hazard Warning

A warning of the loss, discovery, or release of a radiological hazard. Examples include, the theft of a radioactive isotope used for medical, seismic, or other purposes; the discovery of radioactive materials; a transportation (aircraft, truck or rail, etc.) accident which may involve nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, or radioactive wastes. Authorized officials may recommend protective actions to be taken if a radioactive hazard is discovered.

SPW - Shelter in Place Warning

A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place (go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information). Examples include the release of hazardous materials where toxic fumes or radioactivity may affect designated areas.

RWT - Required Weekly Test

A test message that consists, at a minimum, of the header and end-of-message tones. Though an RWT does not need an audio or graphic message announcing the test, many stations provide them as a courtesy to the public. In addition, television stations are not required to transmit a video message for weekly tests. RWTs are scheduled by the station on random days and times during the weeks when there is no required Monthly Test schedule. Broadcast and cable operators generally do not relay incoming RWTs. EAS RWTs may be originated by state and local alerting authorities to confirm the operational status of their IPAWS Live alerting software configuration without fear of interrupting broadcast or cable programming. **(EAS & WEA only)**.

RMT – Required Monthly Test

A test message that is typically a pre-scheduled and coordinated state- or region-wide on an annual basis. RMTs are generally originated by a pre-designated local or state primary station, a state emergency management agency. RMTs must be relayed by broadcast stations and cable channels. RMTs must be performed between 8:30 a.m. and local sunset during odd numbered months, and between local sunset and 8:30 a.m. during even numbered months.

Received monthly tests must be retransmitted within 60 minutes of receipt. Additionally, an RMT should not be scheduled or conducted during an event of great importance such as a pre-announced Presidential speech, coverage of a national/local election, major local or national news coverage outside regularly scheduled newscast hours or a major national sporting event such as the Super Bowl or World Series, with other events such as the Indianapolis 500 and Olympic Games mentioned in the individual EAS state plans. **(EAS & WEA only)**

VOW - Volcano Warning

A warning of current or imminent volcanic activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinances.

Delivery of Messages to Special and Non-English-Speaking Populations

Warning messages should be distributed to all members, to the extent possible, of the community who are at risk, including commuters, travelers or transient populations. This includes people with disabilities or access and functional needs, non-English speakers, people in remote or isolated areas, the elderly, and people with limited technology. Additionally, when providing emergency alerts and notifications, it is vital to note that local, state, and federal governments are keenly aware that not everyone receives or processes information in the same manner. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires jurisdictions make all information accessible to their constituents, including emergency alerts and warnings. As such, governments must account for the access and functional related needs specific to alerts and warnings that impact all individuals, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or low vision, non-English speaking, persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, or any others who receive and/or process information in different ways. Emergency alerts and warnings should account for the wide array of communication needs found in the public.

Alerting authorities should seek resources such as the Department of Health and Human Services or other like agencies to explore opportunities to deliver messages to citizens and visitors with disabilities that might not allow them to receive messages through conventional methods.

Likewise, opportunities to provide Alerts and Warnings to non-English speaking populations should be explored and implemented if possible.

Alert Authorization

Local jurisdictions may authorize emergency broadcasts with IPAWS in accordance with jurisdictional procedures. The COG's IPAWS plan and only after receiving prior approval of the alert message by one of the jurisdiction's authorized individuals. Each COG should have no fewer than two individuals identified by name and in writing to the Maine IPAWS Administrator as having such approval authority. Such authority shall not be permitted until the individual has demonstrated successful completion of IS-247.B "Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for Alert Originators" course and the IS-251.A "Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for Alerting Administrators".

For any instance when an IPAWS alert must be sent to the public, regardless if the local COG authorized individual can be contacted, the local municipality, or COG must contact the MEMA Duty Officer **immediately**.

MEMA Duty Officer: **207-624-4400, or 851-8898 (Pager)**

Alert Decision Making

Criteria for Issuing IPAWS Messages

When circumstances arise and the need for a public warning becomes necessary, the decision to issue a message will ultimately be a matter of local judgment. To assist in the decision-making process the following criteria may be applied:

- Does the hazardous situation require the public to take immediate action?
- Does the hazardous situation pose a serious threat to life or property?
- Is there a high degree of probability the hazardous situation will occur or escalate?
- Do other means of disseminating the alert ensure rapid delivery of urgent information?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, and the decision is made to issue an alert, the following should be included in the message: (Don't worry about the order but try to cover all five elements)

Source:

- Who is issuing the warning?
- Is the warning credible?

Guidance:

- Protective Actions: What protective measures should people take and when?
- If evacuation is called for, where should people go and what should they take with them?

Hazard:

- What is/are the hazards that are threatening?
- What are the potential risks?

Location:

- Where will the impacts occur?
- Is the location described so those without local knowledge will understand their risk? (use known streets, landmarks, terms, etc. do not use coordinates).

Time (duration / termination):

- When should people take action?
- How long will the impact last?

System Use Not Permitted by COG's

FEMA IPAWS cannot be used for the following due to agreements with Maine State Police and NWS:

- Amber Alerts / Blue Alerts - are only allowed to be disseminated by the Maine State Police Major Crimes Unit, and not IPAWS local Authorities.
- Weather Alerts - are only to be distributed by the NWS.
- Non-Emergency notifications.

Special Circumstances for COG's to Issue Alerts

IPAWS Administrators at MEMA are authorized to issue Amber Alerts / Blue Alerts and NWS Alerts only when Maine State Police and / or NWS are unable to send the alerts.

Effective Messaging

Whenever possible, avoid abbreviations, slang or jargon. Text to speech resources (in EAS), may misinterpret what your message is trying to convey. When using text to speech, play the message prior to launching and correct any errors when possible. Once the threat subsides or is no longer a hazard, cancel the alert through IPAWS. WEAs are limited to 90 and 360 characters and abbreviations should be simple and easy to understand.

Cross-Border / Neighboring Jurisdiction Notification

Alerting Coordination

Disasters are not typically limited to jurisdictional boundaries. However, Alerting Authorities are generally bound to their own jurisdiction. When considering issuing an alert and/or warning to the public, jurisdictional coordination, communication, and collaboration should be a priority.

To the extent a warning originator has the ability, warnings should be targeted to the area known to be at risk, while coordinating with any other affected jurisdictions as soon as possible. If the initial warning originator lacks the ability to deliver warnings to the at-risk area, coordination with other jurisdictions should be given priority.

Having relationships in place to ensure continuity of operations is imperative. If a warning is issued from a higher level of government or jurisdiction, lower levels within the target area of the initial warning need not repeat that warning. However, local jurisdictions should issue additional warning messages, or request assistance from an Alerting Authority, if needed, to communicate local variations on the recommended protective action. This assistance could expand the target area for the message or utilize local warning dissemination capabilities that will enhance delivery of the warning to people at risk.

Verify that the message was received by the IPAWS Gateway and is being disseminated as expected based on the options that were selected for the message. It is recommended to notify the following that an IPAWS alert has gone out in case it generates phone calls from citizens:

- The PSAP or Maine State Police Dispatch
- Neighboring agencies if close to another county, large city or adjacent state, tribal entities, and Canada.

Erroneous or False Alert Procedures

Structured training and practice will reduce false alarms. It is recommended that the alerting capability be practiced in a simulated environment. Warning originators should use their best judgment but err on the side of public safety.

In the event that an erroneous, false or misleading alert message is sent:

- The public in the alerted area should be notified immediately that the warning issued, and any protective measures recommended, should be disregarded.
- Notify the issuing agency's leadership of the erroneous message immediately.
- Notify the State IPAWS Administrator for situational awareness.

It is required that the FCC 24 Hour Center be notified that a false alert has been sent within 24 hours of such message being sent. The notification can be sent to the FCC Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) 24/7 Operations Center:

FCCOPCenter@fcc.gov
(202) 418-1122

System Management

Each agency having a MOA with FEMA and which is an approved Collaborative Operating Group, is assigned a COG Identification (ID) and the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) code.

Upon the separation of an employee who has had access, or when the password is suspected or known to have been compromised, the password must be changed immediately by your local system administrator or by contacting your system vendor if the system administrator does not have those capabilities.

It is imperative that all software used to access IPAWS, EAS, WEA or other alerting resources be maintained and kept updated when software updates are released to ensure that access, functionality, and security of alerting access is maintained.

System Security

Every system user is responsible for access security as it relates to their use of IPAWS/WEA messages and shall abide by these Rules of Behavior:

- All users must have a discrete user account ID which cannot be the user's social security number. To protect against unauthorized access, passwords linked to the user ID are used to identify and authenticate authorized users.
- Accounts and passwords shall not be transferred or shared. The sharing of both a user ID and associated password with anyone (including administrators) is prohibited.
- Accounts and passwords shall be protected from disclosure and writing passwords down or electronically storing them on a medium that is accessible by others is prohibited.
- Passwords must not contain names, repetitive patterns, dictionary words, product names, personal identifying information (e.g., birthdates, social security numbers, phone number), and must not be the same as the user ID.
- Passwords must be promptly changed whenever the compromise of a password is known or suspected.
- Users accessing IPAWS: Physically protect computing devices such as laptops, computer gaming consoles, smartphones etc.; protect sensitive data sent to or

received from IPAWS; do not program computing devices with automatic sign-on sequences, passwords or access credentials when using IPAWS.

- Users will not provide or knowingly allow other individuals to use their account credentials to access IPAWS.
- To prevent and deter others from gaining unauthorized access to sensitive resources, users will log off or lock their computer workstation or will use a password-protected screensaver, whenever user steps away from a workstation area, even for a short time and will log off when leaving for the day.
- Inform the local system administrator when access to IPAWS is no longer required.
- Promptly report security incidents to the Local System Administrator.
- All employees should receive cybersecurity awareness training and should follow cybersecurity best practices in protecting both IPAWS physical access equipment and network access.
- Only trained and certified users should be allowed access to the IPAWS software.

IPAWS Application Process

The State IPAWS Administrator has the authority to approve applications for IPAWS Alerting Authorities within the state. It is recommended that agencies desiring to obtain alerting authority contact the State IPAWS Administrator prior to purchasing any software or equipment. It is the IPAWS Administrator's responsibility to ensure that adequate and proper alerting responsibilities are assigned.

How to apply for IPAWS:

1. Contact the State IPAWS Administrator for assistance in the completion of an IPAWS application packet, and approval prior to submission to FEMA.
2. MEMA provides IPAWS compatible software for authorized agencies at no cost.
3. Apply for a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with FEMA https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_ipaws_form-007-0-25_moa-application.pdf. To become a COG, an MOA governing system security must be executed between the sponsoring organization and FEMA. Each MOA is specifically tailored to the sponsoring organization and their interoperable software system. The MOA will be sent as part of the FEMA applications process. The FEMA COG coordinator will prepare and return the MOA for signature after it is submitted and assign a COG identification (ID). After being signed by the applicant, the MOA will be routed for FEMA signatures. A copy of the executed MOA and the COG-specific digital certificate will be returned to the

sponsoring organization. Both the COG ID and digital certificate are necessary to configure the IPAWS compatible software system.

4. Apply for public alerting permissions. You will receive a public alerting application along with your unsigned MOA. This application must be signed by the designated state official, the State IPAWS Administrator.
 - Complete this application defining the types of alerts a COG intends to issue and the extent of its geographic warning area. The contact information for the designated state reviewer will be provided with the public alerting application.
 - This form will be submitted for approval to:
 - The State of Maine IPAWS Administrator:
Steven.Mallory@Maine.Gov
 - Once the signed form is received, please send it to:
IPAWS@FEMA.DHS.GOV.

5. Complete IPAWS web-based training
 - Complete IS-247.B <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is247a.asp>.
 - Send the Certificate of Achievement to:
 - The State of Maine at: Steven.Mallory@Maine.Gov
 - FEMA at: IPAWS@FEMA.DHS.GOV

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
AMBER	America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Responder
CMSP	Commercial Mobile Service Provider
COG	Collaborative Operating Group
EAS	Emergency Alert System
ETN	Electronic Telephone Notification System
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIPS	Federal Information Processing System
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
ID	Identification
IPAWS	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System
MEMA	Maine Emergency Management Agency
MICC	Maine Interoperable Communications Committee
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NWEM	Non-Weather Emergency Messaging
NWS	National Weather Service
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point
PSHSB	FCC Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau
SWIC	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator
WEA	Wireless Emergency Alerts