



West Virginia Offices *of the* Insurance Commissioner



Week Three September 13 – 19: Prepare for Disasters

EMERGENCY ALERTS

When emergencies strike, public safety officials use timely and reliable systems to alert you. This page describes different warning alerts you can get and how to get them.

Wireless Emergency Alerts

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are just one of the ways public safety officials can quickly and effectively alert the public to serious emergencies. They are sent through the [Integrated Public Alert and Warning System \(IPAWS\)](#), which integrates the nation's alert and warning systems, technologies and infrastructure.

What you need to know about WEAs:

- WEAs can be sent by state and local public safety officials, the National Weather Service, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the president of the United States.
- To provide comments or concerns about a WEA sent in your area contact [local officials directly](#).
- WEAs can be issued for five alert categories: imminent threat, public safety, AMBER, Presidential, and test messages.
- WEAs look like text messages but are designed to get your attention with a unique sound and vibration repeated twice.
- WEAs are no more than 360 characters and include the type and time of the alert, any action you should take and the agency issuing the alert.

- WEAs are not affected by network congestion and will not disrupt texts, calls or data sessions that are in progress.
- Mobile users are not charged for receiving WEAs and there is no need to subscribe.

If you are not are not receiving Wireless Emergency Alerts here are some tips to troubleshoot your mobile device:

1. **Check the settings on your mobile phones and review your user manual (you may be able to find this online too)**
 - Older phones may not be WEA capable, and some cell phone models require you to enable WEAs.
 - Most mobile service providers call these messages WEAs, but some manufacturers refer to them as “Government Alerts,” or “Emergency Alert Messages.”
2. **Check with your wireless providers to see if they can resolve the issue**
 - All major phone providers and some smaller providers participate in WEA
 - [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](#) registry of WEA providers
 - [FEMA Integrated Public Alert Warning System \(IPAWS\)](#)

Emergency Alert System

- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system that allows the president to address the American people within 10 minutes during a national emergency. The alerts are sent through broadcasters, satellite digital audio services, direct broadcast satellite providers, cable television systems and wireless cable systems.
- The EAS may also be used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information such as weather information, imminent threats, AMBER alerts and local incident information targeted to specific areas.
- The president has sole responsibility for determining when the national-level EAS will be activated. FEMA is responsible for national-level EAS tests and exercises.
- The EAS is also used when all other means of alerting the public are unavailable.

NOAA Weather Radio

[NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\)](#) is a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information from the nearest National Weather Service office.

- NWR broadcasts official warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- NWR also broadcasts alerts of non-weather emergencies such as national security or public safety threats through the Emergency Alert System.

Associated Content

- [Wireless Emergency Alerts Fact Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Know Your Alerts and Warnings](#) (PDF)
- [Emergency Alert System Fact Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Kids: Wireless Emergency Alerts \(WEA\) and Word Search Puzzle](#) (PDF)
- [Educators: Wireless Emergency Alerts Instructional Materials](#) (PDF)
- [Integrated Public Alert and Warning System \(IPAWS\)](#) (Link)
- [Emergency Alert System](#) (Link)
- [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\)](#) (Link)

For more information about disaster preparedness, please visit our website at:

<https://www.wvinsurance.gov/State-Office-of-the-National-Flood-Insurance-Program>

or contact us at: OICFlood@wv.gov or 304-414-8462.

[Post Disaster Claims Guide](#)

<https://www.ready.gov/flood-toolkit>

<http://www.mapwv.gov/flood/>