

TAB 16

WASHINGTON STATE-LEVEL ACTIVATIONS PROCEDURES

Only the Governor or his/her designated representative, the state Emergency Management Director or their designated representative, or the National Weather Service Meteorologist-in-Charge, Seattle Weather or their designated representative are authorized to initiate (activate) the statewide Emergency Alert System.

It is assumed and encouraged that local activation of the EAS will occur first for most events and state-level activation will rarely occur.

Actual activation messages will be initiated through the state Emergency Operations Center's (EOC's) 24-hour duty officer system.

There are two general conditions whereby the state EAS System will be activated:

1. An event of magnitude requiring a message from state officials through the EOC.

Most circumstances dictate that coordination, discussion, and a decision process will take place between the duty officer, and the Emergency Management Director, leading to the decision to issue an EAS message on the system.

It must be recognized that a rare circumstance, such as a time critical lifesaving action requirement, could dictate that the duty officer make a quick decision to initiate a very short fuse alert message before consultation with appropriate management. The duty officer is so empowered.

2. A local official contacts the EOC requesting the state issue a message via the system on behalf of the locals.

Reasons could vary from known equipment/system failure to personnel problems. For the purpose of this plan, "local official" is the same as identified to activate in a local area EAS plan.

A request from a local entity will come through the duty officer system via the 24-hour, toll-free line, or via Comprehensive Emergency Management Network (CEMNET) Radio, satellite radio, National Warning System (NAWAS), or the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) network. Such a request should be discussed with the Operations Supervisor, the Public Information Officer (PIO), and the Director, if possible. In addition, the local official making the request should also participate in the decision to use EAS and help compose the audio message to be given.

Under paragraph (1) or (2) above, following an EAS activation, it must be assumed that the activation of the system by the EOC or Duty Officer will generate immediate calls from both print and broadcast media.

At the local level, pre-recorded Public Service Announcements (PSAs) should be available, and public information staff should be “on point” (available) immediately following the issuance of the alert message to provide necessary follow-up and answers to media queries.

At the state level, the Emergency Management Division, Public Information Office will provide follow-on input to the broadcast and print media in the form of PSAs or press releases for state-level activations, commensurate with the severity of the event.

Once the decision is made to initiate an EAS message, the following steps will be taken by the duty officer or appropriate communications operator:

1. Bring up the operating screen for EAS on the EAS computer and confirm that computer time and EAS encoder times agree. (This is critical).
2. Point and click on “select scenario” then scroll with the arrow to select the event of interest.
3. Select the appropriate screen to type in the voice message to be recorded. Contents of this message are critical and must be carefully worded. In some cases, the message will already be available in the pre-scripted scenario in the selected boilerplate. In most cases, the message will have to be composed, typed in, then read and recorded.
4. Change/input dates, times, location, and duration in the appropriate boxes on the screen.
5. Select and follow recording instructions on the screen and record a new voice audio message. This audio message should be no longer than two minutes and should be pre-scripted before recording. (The area should be as quiet as possible during the recording).
6. Select appropriate PREVIEW screen and verify all correct data is entered. If time allows, listen to the recorded message for contents and quality. Select “Done.” At this point the screen should have a READY block in the lower left-hand corner of the screen.
7. *Choose the area of the state to be alerted by “selecting” (pressing the button marked) either “All sites” or “East WA” or “West WA” on the ZETRON Console for EAS. You should have green lights next to (left of) all the sites you want the message to go out on.*
8. If the preview is satisfactory, click on READY and then click on SEND. The message is then sent automatically by the system.
9. If time and “tasks to do” allow, make a short announcement on NAWAS that the state has activated the EAS for the alert message. Try to target the affected jurisdictions.
10. Finally, even though the time in the alert message gives an event duration, it is wise to make a conscious decision to officially terminate the event with a short EAS message. This is a discussion and decision process by the appropriate officials as they see fit, but should be sent as soon as practical after the event is over.

11. Updates or continuation of an alert beyond its initial expiration date/time may be broadcast as either an “alert extension” or by a PSA.
12. Notify the Initial Response Team (IRT) PIO as to the message you have sent out.