Template Instructions

A warning, watch, or emergency message is normally issued only once to provide initial alert of the event. A new warning, watch, or emergency message should be issued if the hazard or recommended public protective action(s) has expanded into another county or geographic zone, or if the expiration time has been extended. All other updates or cancellations of the event should be sent as a non-emergency Administrative Message (ADR) or by other means (e.g., telephone, fax, e-mail, or media briefings) to local news media outlets.

Unauthorized Codes.

No codes other than those approved by the FCC will be broadcast or transmitted.

Use of Live Event Codes for Tests.

Use of live event codes for test messages is not permitted, except as part of an authorized drill coordinated with EAS Participants and emergency officials. The danger of accidental broadcast and public confusion is too great. **IMPORTANT:** Always assume any EAS or CAP message may be publicly broadcast or published through any potential EAS or CAP channel. To avoid public confusion, CAP test messages must always identify each part of the message as a test, including: cellular text, computer headline, description and instruction. If an EAS or CAP test message includes an audio portion, the audio message must also identify it as a test.

Pre-recorded Messages.

Pre-recorded emergency messages should not be stored on alerting systems for immediate broadcast for specific sites (Nuclear Power Plants, major dams, etc.) The danger of accidental broadcast of such messages precludes permanent residence on these systems. Blank pre-formats may reside on alerting systems; and pre-recorded messages may be stored on a separate, external disk for manual loading. This has been a continuing problem since paper-tape activation messages for the Emergency Broadcast System were kept next to the teletype machine.

Blackout Periods.

In order to prevent awakening the public in the middle of the night for warnings of non-imminent events, and to reduce disabling of audible alarms, smartphone alerts, etc., a blackout period is recommended from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. local time. In such situations, the warning should be delayed until the end of the blackout period. Other notification channels may still be used, such as email notification, press releases, etc. throughout blackout periods. When significant public impact is expected and lead time is so short that immediate waking up the public is needed before the end of the blackout period, alert channels can be used.

Template Instructions

Emergency Alert System Elements

Originator Code (ORG):	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
Event Code (EEE):	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
Location Codes (PSSCCC):	PSSCCC	Locations included in alert area
Duration (HHMM):	0100	1 Hour

Common Alerting Protocol Elements

Category: Choose an item.
Event: Choose an item.
Response Type: Choose an item.

Urgency:	☐ Immediate	☐ Expected	☐ Future	☐ Past	☐ Unknown
Severity:	☐ Extreme	☐ Severe	☐ Moderate	☐ Minor	☐ Unknown
Certainty:	☐ Observed	☐ Likely	☐ Possible	☐ Unlikely	☐ Unknown

Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) Text (90 characters or less including spaces):

Extremely short alert message with recommended action. No phone numbers, no URLs.

Because the end of the WEA message may be truncated, the suggested order is (1) short description of the hazard (the "why"), (2) short location of where the emergency is taking place (the "where"), (3) action phrase about what to do (the "what"), and (4) the time for action (or "when"). Because WEA should only be used for messages from official sources, the source may be omitted or included at the end of the message. Acronyms for official agencies are often misunderstood by the public and usually do not enhance very short messages.

The <CMAStext> field should always be provided in case the message is distributed through wireless carriers, even if not intended.

Description of the hazard	*[Severity] [Event/Hazard] [Certainty]*
Location of the emergency	in *[Short Area/City/County/State].*
Recommended action (urgency)	*[Recommended Action] [Urgency]*
Expected expiration if known	until *[hh:mm][am/pm].*

Headline (140/160 characters or less including spaces):

This should be a compelling and brief headline. Details should be provided in the <description> and <instruction> fields.

NOAA Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM) limit the headline to 160 characters. Twitter and SMS limit the headline to 140 characters.

Preliminary research (NIST Technical Note 1827) suggests the optimized order for short (90-160 character) messages seems to be: (1) the source, (2) guidance on what to do (the "what"), (3) a description of the hazard and its consequences (the "why"), (4) the location of where the emergency is taking place (the "where"), and (5) the time for action (or "when"). Because the source is usually in the e-mail "From" header or Twitter handle, the source may be omitted from the headline body.

Template Instructions

This field is used by Internet systems as the e-mail subject line; or SMS and Tweet messages.

The <headline> field should always be provided in case message distributed through computer/internet systems, even if not intended.

Recommended action (urgency)	*[Recommended Action] [Urgency]*
Description of hazard	due to *[Severity] [Event/Hazard] [Certainty]*
Location of emergency	in the *[Area/City/County/State]* area
Expected expiration if known	until *[hh:mm] [a.m./p.m.] [Day].*

Description (Instruction + Description should be 1200 characters or less and under 200 words):

The text length of EAS message (FCC required text + description + instruction) must not exceed 1800 characters, and speaking time must not exceed 2 minutes. The suggested maximum length is 1200 characters, approximately 200 words, to avoid accidental message truncation when the FCC required text is added.

NOAA Non-Weather Emergency Message (NWEM) specifications limit the free-text narrative to 200 words. The DHS IPAWS specifications limit the NWEM free-text narrative to 160 words.

A warning message should contain five important topics to ensure the public has sufficient information to respond.

1. Who is providing the message? (i.e., the source of the message)
2. Why do people need to act?
3. Where is the emergency taking place? (i.e., who needs to act and who does not)

The lead sentence in the <description> field may include highlights of instructions. The instruction details should be provided in the <instruction> field.

4. What should people do? (i.e., what actions should the public take in response to the emergency and if necessary, how to take these actions)
5. When do people need to act? (in rapid-onset events, the "when" is likely to be "immediately")

Preliminary research (NIST Technical Note 1827) suggests that the optimized order for longer messages seems to be: (1) source (who), (2) hazard (why), (3) location (where), (4) guidance (what), and (5) time (when).

Regardless of the type of message, and especially given the lack of consensus on message ordering, it is important for emergency personnel to test prepared message templates with a representative sample of the population in the area before they are used. During an emergency, it will not be possible to focus group messages. Always try to keep messages clear, concise and correct; instead of strict adherence to a message template.

Include only details and cautions which are very important for the public to understand the alert or implement recommended actions. Distribute supplemental emergency information and additional details through local media and internet sites instead of EAS.

Template Instructions

The <description> field should always be provided in case message disseminated through internet, broadcast or cable systems, even if not intended.

Lead sentence briefly stating the official source, hazard and location.	The *[Official Government Agency]* is *[Emergency Type]* because a *[Severity]* *[Event/Hazard]* is *[Certainty]* in *[City]* *[State]*.
Why do people need to act? (i.e. description of the incident, hazard and its consequences)	*[Describe the incident, hazard and its consequences]*.
Where is the emergency taking place? (i.e., who needs to act and who does not)	*[Describe location by reference to obvious geographic features, such as roads and rivers, rather than with abstract descriptions such as a one-mile radius of some intersection or government boundaries. The preferred method of describing the area should use compass directions and neighborhood and landmark names where appropriate.]* People in other areas in *[Area/City/County]* are not affected at this time, but should stay alert for changes.

Instruction (Instruction + Description should be 1200 characters or less and under 200 words):

The text length of EAS message (FCC required text + description + instruction) must not exceed 1800 characters, and speaking time must not exceed 2 minutes. The suggested maximum length is 1200 characters, approximately 200 words, to avoid accidental message truncation when the FCC required text is added.

NOAA Non-Weather Emergency Message (NWEM) specifications limit the free-text narrative to 200 words. The DHS IPAWS specifications limit the NWEM free-text narrative to 160 words.

The following should be provided in the <instruction> field.
1. What should people do? (i.e., what actions should the public take in response to the emergency and if necessary, how to take these actions)
2. When do people need to act? (in rapid-onset events, the "when" is likely to be "immediately")

Message closing:
Where to obtain more information about emergency warning. Or All Clear and no further action is necessary.

The <instruction> field should always be provided in case message distributed through internet, broadcast or cable systems, even if not intended.

What should people do? (i.e., what actions should the public take in response to the emergency and if necessary, how to take these actions)	For your personal safety, you should *[Urgency]* *[Recommended actions and extended instructions]*

When do people need to act? (i.e., in rapid-onset events, the "when" is likely to be "immediately", "when" the warning expires, or "when" new information will be received)	The [Event Type] remains in effect until further notice. This message will be updated in [Message Duration], or sooner if needed.
Closing (i.e., where to get more information or All-Clear if no further action is necessary)	For more information, check www.*[Official Web Site]*.gov, or tune to local news media. Please do not call *[9 1 1],* except for a serious emergency.

NOAA Weather Radio format (maximum of 200 words):

Based on FEMA "Template: Emergency Communication Plans and IPAWS". NOAA directives specify a slightly different format. NOAA specifies maximum 200 words, IPAWS specifies maximum of 160 words.

> THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS TRANSMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE [text from **Sender Name**]. [text from **Headline**]. [text from **Description**]. [text from **Instruction**].

EAS message format (maximum of 1800 characters and 2 minutes spoken length):

Based on FEMA "Template: Emergency Communication Plans and IPAWS". Individual EAS manufacturers use different formats and code translations for the FCC required text. Text-to-Speech engines speak at different words-per-minute speeds.

> A CIVIL AUTHORITY HAS ISSUED A [text from **Event Code**] FOR THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES/AREAS: [text from **County Code(s)**] AT [h:mm AM/PM formatted time from **Sent Time**] ON [mmm dd, yyyy formatted date from **Sent Time**] EFFECTIVE UNTIL [h:mm AM/PM formatted time from **Expires Time**]. Message from [text of **Sender Name**]. [text from **Description**]. [text from **Instruction**].