

APPENDIX F
National-level Emergency Alert System

I. GENERAL

This Appendix provides background information on the national level of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Participants in the State and local EAS planning should be aware of this information to understand how their organization level contributes to the nationwide system, and how their operations could be impacted by a nationwide activation.

II. NATIONAL LEVEL EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The President requires a reliable means for communicating with the American public on short notice during periods of national crisis or major emergency to provide reassurance and direction regarding response and recovery. The President must be able to address the Nation on AM and FM radio, as well as television and cable television audio, within ten minutes of an activation notice. In addition, the President must be able to address the Nation on live television, audio and video, upon arrival at a designated television studio. This capability must exist under a variety of conditions, i.e., before, during, and after the situation or attack. Once activated, the national-level EAS remains available for the dissemination of high priority national programming. These capabilities must also be available to any Presidential successors.

III. SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

When activated, the national-level EAS consists of a nationwide network of voluntary communications entities. The system is designed to maintain communications with the general public in the event of an attack, a threat of war, a state of public peril, disaster, or other national emergency. Each EAS source assumes the responsibility for serving a specifically designated area known in the EAS as a Local Area. Serving the Local Area involves disseminating local area instructions, news and information, Presidential messages, Governors' messages, State information, national programming and news.

IV. ACTIVATION AUTHORITY

The authority to activate the national-level EAS rests solely with the President of the United States. The following sequence activates the national-level EAS.

A. *Presidential Decision*

A Presidential Decision to activate the EAS is made, and then passed to the White House Communications Agency (WHCA) for implementation.

B. *The White House Communications Agency Contacts the Federal Emergency Management Agency*

Using either telephone or radio means, the WHCA contacts the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with EAS implementation instructions.

C. The Federal Emergency Management Agency Relays the Order

FEMA, using a network, relays the Emergency Action Notice (EAN) order information to the communications industry.

1. *Communications Entities*

FEMA transmits the EAN to the National Primary (NP) broadcast entities using the EAS system.

2. *Relay*

The EAN is relayed from the PEP stations to the State EAS Network control points and then to all stations and cable systems.

V. PROGRAMMING

Voice circuits are in place for EAS programming at all times and can be originated at FEMA.

VI. TERMINATION

At the conclusion of an incident when the national-level EAS is no longer needed, a termination order is issued. At the conclusion of the EAS program, the WHCA Trip Officer issues a termination order over the program circuitry. FEMA then transmits an Emergency Action Termination (EAT) message. The termination order is then relayed along the EAS network to all EAS participants.