The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

Get Alerts, Stay Alive

IPAWS 101
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Visit [www.fema.gov/informational-materials](http://www.fema.gov/informational-materials) to learn more about how IPAWS is being used across the nation to save lives and protect property
About IPAWS
Presidential Direction

Executive Order 13407 - Public Alert and Warning System

“"It is the policy of the United States to have an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive system to alert and warn the American people in situations of war, terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other hazards to public safety and well-being (public alert and warning system), taking appropriate account of the functions, capabilities, and needs of the private sector and of all levels of government in our Federal system, and to ensure that under all conditions the President can communicate with the American people.”

1995 Presidential Memorandum
“Emergency Alert System (EAS) Statement of Requirements”

The national level EAS must be: Fully integrated from the national to local level, yet capable of independent local (Priority Two) and state (Priority Three) operations.

47 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR)

Part 10 (Wireless Emergency Alerts) – Serve as the Federal Alert Aggregator

Part 11 (Emergency Alert System) - Activation of the “National EAS” for a Presidential Alert
Recent Legislation

IPAWS Modernization Act (Public Law 114-143)
✓ Signed into law April 11, 2016

✓ Modernizes IPAWS to ensure the President can communicate under all conditions
  ▪ Allows Federal, State, tribal, territorial, and local (FSTTL) governments access at other times

✓ Establishes a Subcommittee to the National Advisory Council composed of IPAWS stakeholders to expand collaboration and recommend improvements to the system
The Evolution of Emergency Alerting

1951 - 1963
CONELRAD

Originally called the “Key Station System,” the Control of Electromagnetic Radiation (CONELRAD) was established in August 1951.

Participating stations tuned to 640 & 1240 kHz AM.

Initiated a special sequence and procedure designed to warn citizens.

1963 - 1997
EBS

Established to address the nation through audible alerts.

Did not allow for targeted messaging.

Upgraded in 1976 to provide more accurate alert receptions.

Designed to provide the President with an expeditious method of communicating.

Later expanded for use during peacetime at state and local levels.

1997 - 2006
EAS

Coordinated by the FCC, FEMA and NWS.

Designed for President to address the nation within 10 minutes.

Messages composed of 4 parts:
- Digitally encoded header
- Attention Signal
- Audio Announcement
- Digitally encoded end-of-message marker

Provided better integration.

2006
IPAWS

Modernizes and integrates the nation's alert and warning infrastructure.

Integrates new and existing public alert and warning systems and technologies through adoption of new alert information exchange format - the Common Alerting Protocol, or CAP.

Provides authorities with a broader range of message options and multiple communications pathways.

IPAWS enhances and extends a national infrastructure and capability to local, state, territorial, and tribal officials for public alerting and warning.
What is IPAWS?

✓ IPAWS is a **National System** for **Local Alerting**
  ▪ Supports sending geo-targeted alerts from local, state, tribal, and territorial officials during emergencies and from the President in the event of a catastrophic national emergency
  ▪ Provides authenticated emergency alert and information messaging from public safety officials to the public through:
    • Radio and television via the Emergency Alert System (EAS)
    • Cellular phones via Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
    • NOAA All Hazards National Weather Radio (NWR) via IPAWS-NOAA gateway
    • Internet applications and websites via the IPAWS All-Hazards Information Feed

✓ IPAWS is for:
  ▪ **Emergency** alert and warning information
    • Anything public safety officials determine is a threat to public safety
    • It is not meant for messaging about changes to trash collection schedule
  ▪ Alerting **all** citizens (including those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs) in a given area
What IPAWS is Not

✓ Not a subscription-based mass notification system
✓ Not an Emergency Telephone Notification (ETN) or reverse dial phone system
✓ Not a Short Message Service (SMS) or email - up system
✓ Not a paging or limited distribution notification system
  ▪ e.g. Cannot send a recall notice to a select group
IPAWS Architecture: A National System for Local Alerting

Alerting Authorities
- Local
- State
- Territorial
- Tribal
- Federal* (Includes NOAA)

IPAWS OPEN Alert Aggregator/Gateways

Alert Dissemination Channels (public alerting systems)
- Emergency Alert System
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
- NOAA
- Internet Services
- State / Local Unique Alerting Systems
- Future Technologies

American People
- All Radio and TV
- AM FM; Digital, Analog, Cable, and Satellite cell phones
- Wireless Emergency Alerts capable
- Web applications, widgets, web sites, social media
- FM RBDS ETN
- Siren
- Digital Signage

President

FEMA Operations Centers

FEMA PEP Stations
- XM Sirius Radio
- NPR
- Premier Radio Networks

(Less Resilient Alerting Components)
What Technologies Work with IPAWS?

✓ Broadcast
  ▪ Radio / Wireline Radio
  ▪ TV / Cable
  ▪ Satellite

✓ National Weather Service (NWS)
  ▪ NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio (NWR)
  ▪ NOAA Weather Wire Service (NWWS)
  ▪ Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN)
  ▪ NWS websites and internet feeds

✓ Mobile devices

✓ Internet services

✓ Unique systems
  ▪ Sirens
  ▪ Digital road signs
  ▪ Text-to-Braille translators
  ▪ Etc.

✓ Emerging technologies
When Can IPAWS Be Used?

- Tornados
- Evacuations
- Earthquakes
- Child Abductions/AMBER Alert
- Water Contamination
- Gridlock
- Water and Relief Supply Distribution
- Large Power Outages
- Toxic Plumes
- Volcano
- Shelter-In-Place
- Presidential Alerts
- Disaster Resources
- Wildfires
- Dam Breaks
- Chemical Spills
- Law Enforcement Situations
- Nuclear Accidents
- Road Outages/Closures
- Flash Flooding
- Snowstorms
- **Anything public safety officials determine is a threat to public safety**
IPAWS Components

- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
- National Weather Service (NWS) tools
- Internet Services
- Local, Unique, and Future Technologies
Emergency Alert System and IPAWS

All EAS participants* are required to monitor the IPAWS All Hazards Information Feed for a national EAS emergency alert message

Stations may, if they deem it in the public’s interest, broadcast alerts and warnings from state, local, and National Weather Service officials which are relevant for the area they serve

IPAWS posts a required weekly test (RWT) message for each time zone on the IPAWS All Hazards Information Feed so radio and TV stations can confirm their equipment is functioning

State and local authorities can use IPAWS to route alerts to local EAS stations
  - Many have used IPAWS for monthly and weekly EAS tests

*EAS participants are defined by the FCC’s EAS rules in C.F.R. 47 Part 11 and include all radio and television broadcast, cable, satellite, and wireline providers (e.g. Verizon FiOS or AT&T Uverse)
Emergency Alert System Capabilities

Via IPAWS, in addition to traditional EAS state or local configurations
✓ Trigger TV and radio alerts
✓ FCC requires all licensees to monitor IPAWS All Hazards Information Feed
✓ Supports audio attachments (mp3)
✓ Supports audio links
✓ Supports text to speech

Photo Credit: Hans Yu/ FEMA
FEMA Primary Entry Point (PEP) Stations

✓ To satisfy requirement for a nationwide alert capability for warnings about a national catastrophic event, FEMA maintains relationships and equipment at a number of private sector radio stations across the US

✓ FEMA PEP stations include:
  ▪ extended backup power generation system
  ▪ special communication connections to FEMA
  ▪ back up transmitter and EMP protection (newer stations only)

✓ IPAWS encourages planning and use of PEP stations in state and local disaster response

✓ Ask about FEMA PEP stations in your area
  ▪ In coordination with the station owner, local public safety officials may leverage the more resilient infrastructure of the station for delivering local emergency information when the station is not being used for a national catastrophic emergency

Photo by Lauren McFadden - Jun 28, 2011
Fresno, Calif., June 29, 2011 -- A Primary Entry Point Station used for supporting the Emergency Alert System. - Location: Fresno, CA
Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

- Free
  - No cost to send or receive WEAs

- Not affected by network congestion
  - Uses SMS-Cell Broadcast (SMS-CB), a one-to-many service, to simultaneously deliver messages to multiple recipients in a specified area
  - Different channel than voice, SMS-Person to Person (SMS-PP), email, or web

- Used for imminent threats, AMBER, and Presidential alerts

- Geo-targeted
  - True location based alerting via broadcast from cell towers

- Non-subscription based
  - People who live, work, play, or visit do not need to sign up
  - Sends alerts to mobile devices in an area – not to a database of phone numbers

- Unique ring tone and vibration
  - Alerts “pop-up” on a cell phone

IPAWS is the only way to send WEAs

FEMA
## WEAs Can Impact a Lot of People

### WEA-capable phones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>WEA-capable phones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AT&amp;T</strong></td>
<td>Alcatel 510A; Alcatel 871A; Apple iPhone 6, Apple iPhone 6+, Apple iPhone 5; Apple®iPhone4S; AT&amp;T Fusion 2 (Huawei U8665); BlackBerry 9360, 9810, 9860, 9900; Samsung Galaxy S4 (SGH-i337); Samsung Galaxy S11 (SGH-i777); Samsung Captivate Glide (SGH-i927); Samsung Galaxy Appeal (SGH-i827); Motorola Atrix 2 (mb865)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cellcom</strong></td>
<td>HTC Desire 4G LTE; HTC One V; iPhone 5; LG Converse; LG Optimus Select; Motorola Defy; Motorola Milestone 3; Motorola Milestone X2; Motorola Razr Maxx; Samsung Chrono; Samsung Freeform 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cricket</strong></td>
<td>Blackberry Curve 9350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sprint</strong></td>
<td>All Sprint phones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T-Mobile</strong></td>
<td>Apple iPhone 6, Apple iPhone 6+, Apple iPhone 5; Apple®iPhone4S; Blackberry®Q10; Blackberry Z10; Blackberry Curve 9315; HTC One; HTC One S; Huawei Summit; LG Optimus L9; Nexus 4; Nokia Lumia 521; Nokia Lumia 710; Nokia Lumia 810; Samsung Galaxy S®III LTE; Samsung Galaxy S®Blaze™4G; Samsung Galaxy Exhibit; Samsung Galaxy S III; Samsung Galaxy Note II; Samsung t159; Samsung Galaxy S Relay 4G; Samsung Galaxy S®4; T-Mobile myTouch; T-Mobile myTouch Q; T-Mobile Prism; Windows Phone 8X by HTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US Cellular</strong></td>
<td>Blackberry Curve 9350; Blackberry Torch 9850; LG Freedom; Motorola Electrify 2; Motorola Electrify M; Samsung Character R640; Samsung Chrono 2; Samsung Freeform 4; Samsung Galaxy Axiom; Samsung Galaxy Note II; Samsung Galaxy S III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verizon</strong></td>
<td>Apple iPhone 6, Apple iPhone 6+, Apple® iPhone 4S; Apple® iPhone 5; Blackberry Bold™ 9930; Blackberry Curve™ 9310; Blackberry Curve 9330; Blackberry Torch™ 9850; Blackberry Z10; Casio GZ One Commando®; Casio GZ One Ravine®; Casio GZ One Ravine® 2; DROID DNA by HTC; DROID Incredible by HTC; DROID Incredible 2 by HTC; DROID Incredible 4G LTE by HTC; Droid by Motorola; Droid 2 Global by Motorola; Droid 4G by Motorola; Droid Bionic by Motorola; Droid Charge by Samsung; Droid Pro by Motorola; Droid Razr by Motorola; Droid Razr HD by Motorola; Droid X by Motorola; Droid X2 by Motorola; HTC Rhyme™; HTC Trophy™; Intuition™ by LG; LG Cosmos™ 2; LG Enlighten™; LG Extravert™; LG Revere™; Lucid™ by LG; Lucid™ 2 by LG; Lumia 822; Motorola Barrage™; Motorola Citrus™; Pantech Breakout™; Pantech Hotshot™; Pantech Jest™ 2; Pantech Marauder™; Revolution by LG; Rezound™ by HTC; Samsung Brightside™; Samsung Convoy™ 2; Samsung Fascinate™; Samsung Galaxy Note® II; Samsung Galaxy S® III; Samsung Galaxy Stellar; Samsung Gusto 2; Samsung Illusion; Samsung Intensity III; Samsung Nexus; Samsung Stratosphere™; Samsung Stratosphere™ 2; Spectrum™ by LG; Spectrum™ 2 by LG; Thunderbolt™ by HTC; Windows Phone 8x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This list is not exhaustive; new phones are continually being added*
NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio via IPAWS

- All-Hazards Emergency Message Collection System, or HazCollect interface, enables emergency alert messages from local alerting authorities to be broadcast over local NOAA Weather Radio transmitters directly from an IPAWS alert message
  - Permission to access HazCollect via IPAWS must be coordinated and approved through the NWS in coordination with your local National Weather Service Office (additional info at https://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/hazcollect/)

- NOAA Weather Radio Capabilities
  - Broadcast of Non-Weather Emergency Messages to local weather radios
  - 1000 transmitters nationwide (162.400-162.550 MHz)
  - Alert can “wake up” weather radio in the middle of the night
  - Radios include battery back-up (work when the power is out)
  - Most schools have weather radios
Approved third party internet web services and applications can monitor the All-Hazards Information Feed and retrieve public alerts in CAP format and post or distribute the alert information via their websites, apps, subscription services, etc.

- Computer or Smart Phone Apps
- Social Media
- Subscription services
- Website pop-ups
- 40+ Internet Service Providers have signed an IPAWS Agreement
Local, Unique, and Future Technologies

All interoperation with IPAWS is based upon an open and internationally recognized message exchange data standard, the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP); existing and future technologies that communicate through internet channels and CAP can be programmed to interoperate with IPAWS.

- Local and unique systems
- Sirens
- Digital road signs
- Text-to-Braille translators
- Subscription mass notification systems
- Emerging technologies
Adopting IPAWS
Benefits of IPAWS

- Public alert and warning
- Information sharing capabilities between Collaborative Operating Groups (COG-to-COG)
- Situational awareness
- Incorporates new technologies
- Most resilient, redundant, secure, and accessible form of public alert and warning
- Multiple ways to receive alerts and warnings
- Non-subscription based
- Geo-targeted
- Standardized messaging format
- Rich content (multimedia)
- Free to use
- Increases the impact of public alerts and warnings
Who Can Use IPAWS?

All authorized alerting authorities, including, but not limited to:

- States
- Territories
- Tribes
- Cities
- Counties
- Universities
- Fire and police departments
- Privately owned facilities (e.g. chemical stockpiles, nuclear facilities, railroads, etc.)
- Military Installations
- Federal public safety officials
  - National Weather Service (NWS)
  - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
  - The President

FEMA does not send alerts
FEMA is not an authorized alerting authority
How to Adopt IPAWS

✔ Application Process for COG-to-COG Alerting Access
  (1) Acquire IPAWS-Compatible Alert Software
  (2) Apply for a Memorandum of Agreement with FEMA
  (3) Install Digital Certificate on System
  (4) COG System Ready to Exchange Messages with Other COGs. The COG will now be able to exchange messages with other IPAWS COGs

✔ Application Process for Public Alerting Access
If a COG requires access to public alerting in addition to COG-to-COG messaging, the following additional steps must be completed
  (1) Complete IPAWS Public Alerting Application
  (2) Submit Public Alerting Application to Designated State Official
  (3) Complete IS-247.a—IPAWS Web-based Training (WBT)
  (4) Submit State-Approved Public Alerting Application and IS-247.a Certificate of Completion to IPAWS
The COG’s public alerting permission will now be enabled in IPAWS and the COG will be able to issue public alerts to the authorized area

✔ Go to www.fema.gov/informational-materials for a detailed checklist for adopting IPAWS

All IPAWS COGs have COG-to-COG alerting access; not all IPAWS COGs have public alerting access
Tools to Understand, Adopt, Implement, and Use IPAWS

✓ Online training for the public
✓ Online training for alerting authorities
✓ Public service announcements (PSAs)
✓ Testing labs and capabilities (the IPAWS Lab at JITC)
✓ Toolkit for alerting authorities
✓ Templates for governance plans
✓ Checklists for adopting, implementing, and using IPAWS
✓ Digital library resources
✓ Grant guidance
✓ Webinars
✓ Many other resources

Find these resources at www.fema.gov/informational-materials
Alert and warning training for the American Public (EMI course IS-248)

- The American public course is designed to educate the public and demonstrate the relevance and importance of IPAWS in their lives before, during, and after a disaster.

- Ensure people understand how to access, use, and respond to public alert and warning information from public safety officials.

IPAWS Public Education Campaign

✓ Visit www.Ready.gov/alerts to view the PSAs

✓ FEMA and the Ad Council produced Public Safety Announcements (PSAs) on Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) for distribution
  - 20 and 30 seconds
  - English and Spanish
  - Radio and TV

✓ IPAWS is working with Ready.gov to create content on alerts and warnings for the Children’s Preparedness section

✓ Public safety officials and broadcasters can download free PSAs, customize the tag line, and make the PSAs a part of public education campaigns

Photos by FEMA
Graphic
Ad Council, Ready.gov, and FEMA sponsored picture of the wireless emergency alert on iOS. To promote Wireless Emergency Alerts. Sept. 23, 2013
EMI Independent Study Courses for Alerting Authorities (IS-247a and IS-251)

Learn
- Benefits of using IPAWS for effective public warnings
- Skills to draft more appropriate, effective, and accessible warning messages using best practices in alerting
- Best practices in the effective use of Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)
- About Collaborative Operating Groups (COGs)—how they are issued, their structure, their capabilities, and their responsibilities

As of March 2017, 20,952 people have completed IS-247a/IS-251
- Required training for IPAWS alerting authorities

IS-251 was released in June 2014 and is an advanced course for alerting authorities
Digital Library of Alert and Warning Resources

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) FAQs
- Alerting Authorities FAQs
- EAS Best Practices Guide
- Fact Sheets
  - IPAWS Open Platform for Emergency Networks (IPAWS-OPEN)
  - Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)
  - Emergency Alert System (EAS)
  - Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
  - How to Sign Up for IPAWS
  - All-Hazard Alerting
  - AMBER Alerts
  - Alerting Americans with Disabilities and Others With Access and Functional Needs
  - IPAWS and the American People
- Games and worksheets for kids

All resources can be found at [www.fema.gov/ipaws](http://www.fema.gov/ipaws) or [www.fema.gov/informational-materials](http://www.fema.gov/informational-materials)
Testing with the IPAWS Lab

✓ The IPAWS Lab supports state and local alerting tool evaluation, demonstration, exercises and testing
Public Alert and Warning
Hazard Symbology
Why Hazard Symbols?

- Making public alerts and warnings more effective for
  - people with disabilities or Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
  - the whole community
- Common, standardized symbols
- Easily recognized visual cues
Symbology Development

Background

✓ Developed in response to Executive Order 13407
  ▪ “…the capability to alert and warn all Americans, including those with disabilities and those without an understanding of the English language”
✓ IPAWS Alert & Warning Working Group formed
  ▪ IPAWS Program Management Office (PMO)
  ▪ DHS Science & Technology (S&T)
  ▪ DHS Geospatial Management Office (GMO)
✓ To date, 16 of 52 hazard symbols are in-process* specifically to accompany public alerts and warnings
✓ The symbols can be accessed through the Symbol Library Tool at http://www.napsgfoundation.org/all-resources/symbology-library/

* Currently published by the National Alliance for Public Safety GIS Foundation (NAPSG)
# 16 Approved Symbols

<table>
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<tr>
<th>IPAWS WEA Event Code</th>
<th>Category or Sub-Category</th>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVW</td>
<td>Avalanche Warning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BZW</td>
<td>Blizzard Warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>Child Abduction Emergency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEM</td>
<td>Civil Emergency Message</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSW</td>
<td>Dust Storm Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQW</td>
<td>Earthquake Warning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRW</td>
<td>Fire Warning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FFW</td>
<td>Flash Flood Warning</td>
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</table>

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<th>IPAWS WEA Event Code</th>
<th>Category or Sub-Category</th>
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<td>FLW</td>
<td>Flood Warning</td>
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<td>HUW</td>
<td>Hurricane Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEW</td>
<td>Law Enforcement Warning</td>
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<td>NUW</td>
<td>Nuclear Power Plant Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAN</td>
<td>Presidential Emergency Alert Notification</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RHW</td>
<td>Radiological Hazard Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPW</td>
<td>Shelter in Place Warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOR</td>
<td>Tornado Warning</td>
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</table>
IPAWS in Action
Shortly before a Friday night football game, a tornado touched down at the Cass Midway school grounds in Cleveland, MO, sending about 350 people inside to seek shelter.

A high school football player recalled, “Everything looked good. Everything looked clear. Then all of a sudden, all of our phones went off, and we got tornado alerts and had to get shelter.”

The school credited early warnings for its decision to shelter about 250 people 10 minutes before game kick-off.

WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS IN ACTION

http://www.kansascity.com/latest-news/article35820834.html
(September 2015)
Wildfires swept across 40,000 acres in San Luis Obispo County, destroying 48 homes.

Emergency officials sent three WEAs to people in specific areas threatened by the fire, advising them to evacuate. One emergency official said the WEAs had produced “excellent results,” noting that a WEA sent at 7:50pm Sunday evening was received by a local citizen and re-posted to social media shortly after.

Officials coordinated WEA messages with neighboring Monterey County to manage evacuations.

Photo courtesy of calfireslo.org (August 2016)
Storms pummeled through a region where traditional tornado sirens could never penetrate the structural precautions used to ward off hurricanes, and the area's high water table makes basements a rare find.

WEA alerts gave the people who were in the heart of destruction enough time to jump into a closet or a bathroom. The phones likely saved lives.

“If something happens in the middle of the night like we saw on Sunday, there's nothing else that's going to alert you like that.”
ARMED ROBBER APPREHENDED IN VIRGINIA

Martinsville law enforcement released a WEA after receiving a call from a business reporting an armed robber on the loose.

Citizens recognized the suspect at a local convenience store and called the 911 dispatch center informing them of the suspect’s whereabouts.

Law enforcement credits IPAWS and the use of WEAs with the quick apprehension of the dangerous criminal.

(October 2015)
AMBER ALERT: PASCO, WASHINGTON

A Pasco resident was pulling into a Wendy’s parking lot when he received an AMBER Alert on his phone.

He spotted the vehicle featured on the AMBER Alert and called 911.

Two girls, who had been in the backseat of the stolen vehicle, were reunited with their families.

AMBER ALERT: MILWAUKEE, WI

A suspect stole a vehicle with a 15-month-old boy in the back seat.

Milwaukee resident, Gordon Sullivan, received an AMBER Alert on his phone and recognized the vehicle in the description as a vehicle he had seen earlier that day.

Sullivan contacted police, and the baby was found asleep in the car when police arrived.


WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS IN ACTION
For More Information

IPAWS Inbox: IPAWS@fema.dhs.gov

IPAWS Website: http://www.fema.gov/ipaws


