

EAS Readiness

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EAS REQUIREMENTS

The Federal Commissions Commission has vowed to continue to take action against unlicensed station operators, excessive RF radiation, not complying with the public file requirements, EAS requirements, and antenna safety requirements. The decision by the FCC reflects the importance for broadcasters to get a firm handle on their station's compliance. Study the FCC Rules & Regulations and insure your station is complying. I have selected EAS, at this time, due to EAS's importance and FCC's attention.

EAS HANDBOOK

All stations are to maintain a 1. EAS Operating 2001 (AM & FM) or (TV) Handbook & 2. CURRENT state Handbook. The handbooks are to be available at ALL EAS control points. [See 11.15]

EAS DECODER/MONITOR

All stations must have equipment installed and capable of decoding, either manually or automatically, the digitally encoded EAS protocol while monitoring at least TWO ASSIGNED EAS STATIONS. This equipment must be operational during all hours of broadcast operation. Manually operated equipment must be located so that operators, at their normal duty stations, can be alerted immediately when EAS messages are received. Only one EAS decoder is required for pauperism facilities operating from one common location, such as a co-owned and co-located AM and FM studio. All decoder devices are to be certified by the Commission in accordance with Part 2 Subpart J of the Commission's rules. [See 11.31, 11.33, 11.34, 11.35 and 11.52]

MONITORING ASSIGNED STATION: The EAS decoder/monitor is to be tuned to receive EAS activations from the monitoring priorities named in the FCC-EAS Mapbook or State EAS plan. [See 11.52 and the FCC-EAS Mapbook]

LOCATION: For manually operated equipment, the equipment is to be positioned where responsible broadcast staff can initiate an activation during any portion of the broadcast day. [See 11.51]

EAS TESTS:

All stations, except Class D non-commercial stations, are to conduct required weekly tests (RWT) of the EAS header and End of Message (EOM) codes a minimum of once a week at random days and times, which can include any time of the day or night. In addition, required monthly tests (RMT) are to be conducted once a month as coordinated by the Emergency Communications Committee for each state. The RWT is optional during the week that a monthly (RMT) test is conducted. The monthly test conducted in odd numbered months shall occur between 8:30 a.m. local time and local sunset. The monthly test conducted in even numbered months shall occur between local sunset and 8:30 a.m. local time. [See 11.61][See 11.61(a)]

Note1: Since stations are required to monitor two EAS sources, then each station should receive at least one RWT from each of the two sources. The RMT may result in only one test being received during that week.

Note2: If the station is not operating at the time an RMT is scheduled, then the licensee shall log that they were off the air and an RWT should be aired some time during the week after operation of the station resumes.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A TEST EACH WEEK from your two assigned monitoring sources take the following actions:

DETERMINE WHY NO TEST WAS RECEIVED. 1. Check your station equipment 2. Call your monitoring sources. Document your findings in the station logs. Take appropriate correction action.

STATION LOGS:

All stations are to maintain a station log containing entries pertaining to each test of the Emergency Alert System that is received or initiated by the station. EAS test entries must be made in the station log either manually by responsible broadcast station staff, or by an automatic device. Stations may keep EAS test data in a special EAS log which can be

maintained at any convenient location; however, such log must be considered a part of the official station log. It is also to contain entries which adequately describe the reason why any test activation was not received and any corrective action taken. [See 11.35(a), 11.51(j), 11.52(e), 11.61(b) and 73.1820(a) (1) (iii)]

Whenever any EAS equipment becomes defective, the station may operate without the defective equipment, pending its repair or replacement, for a period not in excess of 60 days. The station must make appropriate entries into the station log showing the date and time the equipment was removed and restored to service. [See 11.35(b)]

If the station cannot restore service to the defective equipment within 60 days due to conditions beyond the control of the licensee, then the station must request an extension of this time from the FCC District Director of the area in which the station is located. Such request shall include the steps that were taken to repair or replace the defective equipment, the alternative procedures being used while the defective equipment is out of service and an estimation when the defective equipment will be repaired or replaced. [See 11.35(a), 11.35(b), 11.35(c), 11.51(j), 11.52(e), and 73.1820(a)(1)(iii)]

FAILURE TO RECEIVE EAS TEST:

The station log must contain appropriate entries indicating the reasons why required EAS Weekly/Monthly Test Transmissions were not received. EQUIPMENT OUTAGE: The station log must contain appropriate entries documenting the date and time any EAS equipment was removed and/or restored to service.

The CHIEF OPERATOR is to review the station logs at least once each week to determine if required entries are being made correctly and to SIGN AND DATE the log upon completion of the review.