Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs

Warning

Primary Agency Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)

Support Agencies Illinois State Police (ISP)
Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
Illinois Department of Military Affairs (IDMA)
National Weather Service (NWS)

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

1. This Annex describes the rationale behind the need for warning systems, the agencies that participate in the warning function, the State's warning system and local stations participation and monitoring assignments for the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

B. Scope

1. Federal, State, and local governments have addressed the function of warning. The EAS is readjusted and improved upon throughout a variety of tests and evaluation and is a growing and evolving network.

II. Assumptions

A. Success in saving lives and property is dependent upon timely dissemination of warning and emergency information to persons in threatened areas.

B. Some disasters provide no time or opportunity for warning.

C. Local government will establish appropriate warning systems.

D. All levels of government and personnel will cooperate to activate warning systems.

E. Some people will not heed warnings.

F. The EAS provides officials with an expeditious method of communicating with the public, i.e., disseminating emergency information and instructions in threatened or actual emergency.

G. The EAS can be operated on the national, State, or local level.

H. The listening and viewing habits of the public are taken into consideration and are of positive benefit to the effectiveness of the EAS.

I. Tests will familiarize officials, broadcasters, and the public with EAS procedures.

III. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. Warning is the alerting of governmental forces and the public to the threat of imminent extraordinary danger.

2. Dependent upon the nature of the threat and the population group at risk, warning can originate at any level of government.

B. Warning Systems

1. Homeland Security Advisory System

a. The Homeland Security Advisory System was designed to provide the nation with a uniform method of warning in the event of terrorist activity. The system has been divided into five color coded levels.

1. “Severe” is the highest level of the Homeland Security Advisory System. This level indicates a

severe risk of terrorist attack and has been designated the alert color “Red”.

2. “High” is the next highest level of the advisory system. This level indicates a high risk of terrorist attack and has been designated the alert color “Orange”.

3. “Elevated” is the third level of the advisory system. This level indicates a significant risk of terrorist attack and has been designated the alert color “Yellow”.

4. “Guarded” is the fourth level of the advisory system. This level indicates a general risk of terrorist attack and has been designated the alert color “Blue”.

5. “Low” is the lowest level of the advisory system. This level indicates a low risk of terrorist attack and has been designated the alert color “Green”.

2. National Warning System (NAWAS)

a. The National Warning System, (NAWAS), is a four-wire party line telephone circuit, connecting the National Warning Center at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado, with the Alternate National Warning Center at Olney, Maryland. NORAD is responsible for the aerospace defense of the North American Continent.

b. If warranted, the information is then given to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Attack Warning Officers assigned to NORAD Headquarters. FEMA will warn the civilian population of enemy attack over the National Warning System to each State Warning Point.

c. The State Warning Point has special switching equipment to isolate the State NAWAS circuit from the National circuit.

d. IEMA has delegated the operational functions of warning to the Illinois State Police (ISP). The ISP disseminates warning messages to the Sheriff of each county and to designated State officials.

(1) The Illinois State Warning Point is at the State Police Springfield Communications Center in Springfield. The Alternate State Warning Point is located in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). All State Police districts have NAWAS installations. There are twenty-four (24) Primary Warning Points and twenty-two (22) NAWAS Extensions in Illinois, besides those at the State Warning Point and Alternate State Warning Point.

(2) When a warning message is received, the State Warning Point, makes a roll call to ensure that all NAWAS Primary Warning Points have received the message. Each district then forwards the warning message either by radio, telephone, or by dispatching a messenger to the Sheriff of each county within their area and to designated State officials.

(3) ISP district radio transmitting stations are equipped with tone encoders to activate radio receivers on a State frequency.

(4) Officials of all counties, cities, towns, institutions, hospitals, industrial plants, and schools are urged to install a radio receiver equipped with a tone decoder tuned to a specified State Police radio channel to receive warning messages directly and take appropriate action. Such an installation does

not relieve officials of their legal responsibility to fan out warning messages received from the ISP.

(5) The sheriff is required to pass warning messages to designated officials in the county and in each city or town warning point and to the people in unincorporated areas within the county.

(6) City and town officials have the responsibility to alert the public and take prescribed action.

3. Outdoor Public Warning/Alerting Systems

a. All cities and towns are encouraged to install an outdoor public warning system capable of alerting at least 85% of the population.

b. The control of operation of such a system is to be at the warning point.

(1) Outdoor Warning/Alerting Signals

(a). Outdoor warning devices must be capable of producing the two warning signals:

(aa). The **ALERT** signal, a steady blast or tone of three to five minutes.

(bb). The **TAKE COVER** signal, a three-minute wailing (rising and falling) tone or a series of short blasts.

(2). The **ALERT** signal means - "Turn on your radio. Tune to your local station for information and instructions. Do not use your phone."

(3) Local authorities may use the **ALERT** signal in the event of a Severe Weather Warning, Tornado Warning, or for other emergencies involving the

public. Information and instructions should then be given over the local radio station.

(4). The **TAKE COVER** signal means one thing - "Take Cover."

(a). This signal will only be used in case of enemy attack and means "Seek immediate shelter. Take your portable AM radio with you and any personal supplies that you may need, medicine or special food."

(5). The IEMA Act in Sec.12. Testing of Disaster Warning Devices states the testing of disaster warning devices including outdoor warning sirens shall be held only on the first Tuesday of each month at 10 o'clock in the morning or during exercises that are specifically and expressly approved in advance by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.

4. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio as National Warning System

a. The NOAA Weather Radio Broadcast is the only federally sponsored radio transmission of warning information to receivers optionally available to the general public. NOAA Weather Radio has also been designated as a supplementary attack warning system (Weather Services Operations Manual).

b. The National Weather Service (NWS) operates more than 370 stations. Approximately 90 percent of the Nation's population is within listening range of a NOAA Weather Radio broadcast Stations offering coverage in Illinois are:

CITY	FREQUENCY
Champaign	162.550 MHZ
Chicago	162.550 MHZ
Dubuque, IA	162.400 MHZ
Evansville, IN	162.550 MHZ
Hannibal, MO	162.475 MHZ
Marion	162.425 MHZ
Moline	162.550 MHZ
Peoria	162.475 MHZ
Rockford	162.475 MHZ
Springfield	162.400 MHZ
St. Charles, MO	162.550 MHZ

c. NWS Field Offices also have responsibility to disseminate "ATTACK WARNING" over the NOAA Weather Radio Receivers. This participation is limited, however, to NOAA Weather Radio Offices that have NAWAS. The exact wording of the warning message has been prepared and will be broadcast exactly as written.

d. Where the capability exists, NWS field offices will broadcast the message live while simultaneously taping it for continuous broadcast.

5. Other Warning Systems

a. IEMA is equipped with a low-band radio system that allows two-way conversation with approximately 80 county and municipal Emergency Services and Disaster Agencies (ESDAs) that have their own warning plans and systems. In addition, IEMA can contact various State agencies and Weather Service Offices on this frequency. (See the Basic Section, Attachment 1 [Illinois Disaster Management System] for information on other communications networks.)

b. The NWS is responsible for warning the civilian population concerning severe weather forecasts and

weather Watch and Warnings. The NWS Forecast Office in Chicago transmits Severe Weather Watch Bulletins for Illinois issued by the Severe Storm Forecast Center in Kansas City, Missouri, to the State Warning Point over the NAWAS circuit or Illinois Weather Wire.

c. Local NWS Offices are responsible for the transmitting of Severe Storm Warnings for their areas of county responsibility to the Illinois State Warning Point over the NAWAS.

d. All local NWS Offices indicate the counties and ISP districts affected by such bulletins.

e. ISP forwards these messages to the Sheriff of the involved counties and simultaneously alerts all Warning Receivers with tone decoder. ISP vehicles may be dispatched to investigate reports of funnel clouds, etc., and advise of their direction of movement. This information is also broadcast on the NAWAS circuit and the ISP radio system.

f. All designated officials or their alternates who receive warning messages should have a fan-out notification list.

6. Local Government

a. Local government should establish appropriate warning systems available for short or no warning disasters, for tornadoes and other weather and flood related disasters.

(1) Local media outlets are usually extremely cooperative in providing assistance. Trained volunteers are extremely useful as weather spotters for a local jurisdiction.

b. The critical key for local government warning response is effective coordination of the entire process from receipt of a warning to dissemination.

C. Emergency Alert System

1. The EAS is composed of AM, FM, TV and cable broadcast stations and nongovernmental industries operating on a voluntary, organized basis during emergencies at National, State, or Operational (Local) area levels. The EAS was designed to provide a means of communicating with the public in a period proceeding, during, or following enemy attack or another national emergency.

2. The EAS has been expanded so that it can also be used during day-to-day emergencies at the State and local levels to provide the means for prompt, reliable receipt and release of life-and-property-saving warning as well as emergency information. Examples of these emergencies are: tornadoes, floods, severe winter weather, earthquakes, transportation and nuclear accidents involving hazardous materials and toxic gases, etc.

3. The Illinois Emergency Alert System Operational Plan (EASOP) is the document that details the procedures used by the broadcast industry, cable operators, and designated government officials.

D. Federal Coordination

1. The national message is received at IEMA's communications center and disseminated over the IEMA Low Band Radio System to broadcast and cable operators within the State. Through an agreement with the broadcasters and IEMA, the Governor can broadcast a live or taped message to the people of Illinois that is pertinent to the specific emergency.

2. Under a Presidential Declaration of a major disaster or emergency, State agencies may coordinate with their Federal counterparts when Federal assets are required.

IV. Responsibilities

A. Primary Agency - Illinois Emergency Management Agency

1. coordinates alternate communications and warning, if radio and telephone communications are not in operation,

2. develop scripted emergency public information messages for broadcast over EAS following disaster.

B. Support Agencies

1. Illinois State Police

a. manages the State Warning Point,

b. disseminates warnings to county Sheriffs and local officials,

c. provides local warnings through use of vehicles with mobile public address systems,

d. provides notification of other first responders. The ISP officers who first respond to the scene of any disaster will immediately notify their nearest district headquarters who will then notify the ISP Springfield Communications Center. The call-out procedure of the District's Contingency Plan and the ISP's Emergency Response Plan will then be put into effect,

e. The ISP Springfield Communications Center will notify the SEOC of the initial damage assessment, injuries, fatalities, etc. Coordination with all agencies will commence. ISP personnel placed on standby are required to report for duty within one hour and be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

2. Illinois Department of Natural Resources

   a. disseminates warnings from ISP on its lands and waters,

   b. provides local warnings along waterfront areas as requested by ISP (via boats, all terrain vehicles [ATVs], snowmobiles, or other 4-wheel drive vehicles).

3. Illinois Department of Military Affairs

   a. provides support to law enforcement agencies for natural and technological disasters when called to State Active Duty by the Governor,

   b. provides small scale local warnings when already activated.

4. National Weather Service (See section III.B.3. and 4.)

V. Authorities

A. Title 47 U.S.C. 151, 154(I.), (o), and 303(4); Chapter I, Part 73, Subpart G, Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations, Radio Broadcast Services

VI. References

A. Emergency Alert System Operational Plan (EASOP)

B. ISP District Contingency Plans

C. ISP Emergency Response Plan

D. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended

E. ING State Active Duty Plan

F. State of Illinois Emergency Alert System (EAS)

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