

WASHINGTON, DC--On November 9, 2011, at 2 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will conduct the first-ever nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). At that time, an announcement will come on every TV and radio channel indicating that the emergency alert system has been activated. This is only a test. Please do not be alarmed when you see this message. You will not need to take any action.

The purpose of the test is to assess how well the EAS can alert the public during certain national emergencies. Although the FCC and FEMA are taking steps to ensure that everyone has access to announcements made during the test, some people watching cable television (as well as some others) may receive only an audio (not a visual) notice that this is a test. The FCC and FEMA want to make consumers aware of the test so that they understand that this is only a test and that there is no real emergency.

What is the EAS? EAS alerts are sent over the radio or television (broadcast, cable and satellite). State and local emergency managers use these alerts to notify the public about emergencies and weather events, such as tornadoes and hurricanes. The EAS can also be used to send an alert across the United States if there is a national emergency. It is common for state and local EAS tests to occur on a monthly and weekly basis, respectively, but there has never been a test of the nationwide EAS alert on all broadcast, cable and satellite radio and television systems at the same time.

The November 9th test will help ensure that the EAS will work if public safety officials ever need to send an alert or warning to the entire country or to a large region of the United States.

What will be different about this EAS test? The nationwide EAS test on November 9th may be similar to other EAS tests that you have seen. Such tests include an audio EAS tone and a message indicating that “This is a test of the Emergency Alerting System.” The nationwide EAS test will last a little longer—about 3 minutes. In addition, due to technical limitations, a visual message indicating that “this is a test” may not appear on every television channel, especially

for cable subscribers. For these reasons, the FCC and FEMA are taking extra steps to educate the public, especially people with hearing disabilities, that this is only a test.

For more information about how this EAS test may affect you, please visit: www.fcc.gov/nationwideeastest

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