

Questions from October 10, 2017 State of 911 Webinar

Questions for Mark Lucero:

Question: Do you have regional liaison reps in various states? CALIFORNIA?

Response: We do not have formal regional liaisons for IPAWS, however David Benoit from FEMA Region 9 is very knowledgeable about IPAWS. His contact info is as follows:

David W. Benoit
Regional Disaster Emergency Communications Coordinator
Disaster Response Division
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region IX
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA 94607
510-627-7268 – Office
510-289-0116 – Mobile
510-627-7231 – Fax
David.Benoit@fema.dhs.gov

Each state has an IPAWS State Reviewer who verifies IPAWS applications coming from counties, municipalities, etc. The California State reviewer is as follows:

Art Botterell
Senior Emergency Services Coordinator
Response Division, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
M: (916) 832-4229
O: (916) 636-3872
Arthur.Botterell@CalOES.ca.gov

If you're looking for specific or detailed info about IPAWS, our headquarters office supports the entire nation. The best way to reach us is via email at IPAWS@FEMA.DHS.GOV

Question: Is there a formal plan to promote the use of IPAWS on the part of PSAPs to notify the public of 9-1-1 disruptions? This would seem to be a primary use of this system for PSAPs and a very important tool.

Response: Any plans to do so would be local plans, not FEMA plans. As such, I'm not aware of any existing plans that specific this action in response to disruptions. Anecdotally, I know that the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency did use IPAWS to alert the public of a 911 disruption on September 15, 2014. One item of note is that the WEA system does not currently "recognize" the 911 Telephone Outage Emergency event code. One would need to select a different event code in order to get this alert out over WEA (using Local Area Emergency event code for instance).

Question: Can messages be sent based on geographic area?

Response: Yes, the alert originator must specify the alert area in their alert message. The EAS system uses FIPS codes (county codes). The WEA system uses FIPS codes, but the alert area may be further specified using a polygon and/or circle. In practice, we find that most WEA alerts go out to a larger area than what is specified. This is due to the fact that WEA utilizes broadcast technology versus point-to-point, or GPS assisted targeting methods.

Question: Is there a way for the alert to go out to those who are in the warning area after the initial warning goes out?

Response: Yes, there are a few ways this happens. If a WEA message is sent to an area with a 4 hour expiration time. All phones in the area will get the alert immediately. Any phone that does not get it the first time (drive into the area, phone was turned off, regained cell reception, etc) will get it when the alert is automatically rebroadcast every 5 minutes or so until the alert expires.

Alternatively, if the alert originator wants to intentionally send out a new message (either updated info, or simply to re-emphasize the warning) they may do so by sending an UPDATE to the original ALERT. UPDATE will effectively cancel the original ALERT and replace it with the UPDATE message. Any new phone coming into the alert area would receive the UPDATE message versus the original ALERT message.

Questions for Kevin Haight:

Question: How did Idaho fund the mandatory minimum training that is dictated in the statute?

Response: The Idaho law directs the Idaho POST (Peace Officer Standards & Training) Academy to use the funds they receive (portion of citation fines, legislative appropriation, etc.) for peace officer, detention officer, and probation officer training. The same statute was amended to include the Emergency Communications Officer professional certification as being funded (administrative costs only) from those dollars too. Additionally, the IPSCC (Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission) has committed 9-1-1 funds to POST, up to \$15,000 per year, to assist them with the administrative costs of this new mandate. Every agency will still have a very modest tuition charge, per student, of \$400.

Question: Excellent presentation from Idaho!