

ALERT

FCC Announces Date for Mandatory National EAS Test

July 18, 2016

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission)'s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has announced that the next nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will take place on September 28, 2016, at 2:20 PM EDT, with a secondary test date of October 5, 2016, if necessary.

According to the FCC's public notice:

The nationwide test will assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS, with a particular emphasis on testing the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), the integrated gateway through which common alerting protocol-based (CAP-based) EAS alerts are disseminated to EAS Participants. The test message will clearly state that the alert is only a test of the EAS. FEMA's alert will be transmitted in English and Spanish and include both audio and the text of the test message, which can be used to populate an accessible video crawl. These improvements will help ensure that all members of the public, including non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, will receive emergency information. The test will provide an opportunity to evaluate this and other measures that the FCC has adopted to address issues identified in connection with the 2011 Nationwide EAS Test.

The nationwide test will allow the FCC and FEMA to analyze the efficacy of both the new National Periodic Test event code and the EAS Test Reporting System (ETRS), which we discussed in further detail in a recent client alert.

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EAS Participants must complete ETRS Form One, which includes basic information about the participant, by August 26, 2016. The deadline to complete ETRS Form Two, with "day of test" information, will be September 28, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. EAS Participants will then have until November 14, 2016 to submit their detailed post-test data on ETRS Form Three.

Please contact the Wiley Rein attorney who regularly handles your FCC matters or one of the attorneys listed on this alert with any questions.