



## Primary Entry Point (PEP) Stations

### What is a Primary Entry Point (PEP) Station?

Primary Entry Point (PEP) stations are privately owned commercial and non-commercial radio broadcast stations that cooperatively participate with FEMA to provide emergency alert and warning information to the public before, during, and after a national or local emergency. PEP stations located throughout the country have a direct connection to FEMA and serve as the primary broadcast source for Presidential National Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages. PEP stations network to other broadcast stations in order to disseminate messages throughout the country. State and local public safety officials can leverage EAS and FEMA PEP stations when they are not in use for National EAS warning messages.

PEP stations are equipped with back-up communications equipment and emergency power generators designed to enable them to continue broadcasting warning and safety information to the public before, during, and after a disaster so that under all conditions the President of the United States can alert and warn the public. FEMA, in cooperation with station licensees and operators of station facilities, maintain PEP stations in order to provide a national alert and warning capability in case of a national catastrophic event. PEP stations owners and managers voluntarily participate in the FEMA PEP program to ensure that the public can receive alerts and warnings when they need them most.

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Program Management Office (PMO) recently completed expanding the number of PEP stations across the nation to provide direct broadcast coverage from PEP stations to over 90 percent of the US population. The IPAWS PMO continues to modernize older stations or legacy PEP stations to reinforce their resiliency.

### History of the Emergency Alert System

In 1951, the CONTROL of ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION, originally called the “Key Station System” or CONELRAD, initiated a special sequence and procedure on participating stations tuned to 640 and 1240 kHz AM. Originally conceived to thwart radio direction finding navigation by enemy bombers, CONELRAD took on another role of warning citizens of imminent danger. In 1963, the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) was initiated to address the nation through audible alerts. EBS upgraded in 1976 to provide for more accurate handling of alert receptions. During this time, the PEP station concept emerged and EBS was expanded for use during peacetime at state and local levels.

In 1997, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) was designed. The EAS is a national public warning system that requires broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service (SDARS) providers, and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) providers to provide the President with communications capability to address the American people within ten minutes during a national

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emergency. The system also may be used by state and local authorities, in cooperation with the broadcast community, to deliver important emergency information, such as weather information, AMBER alerts, and local incident information targeted to specific areas. EAS messages are composed of a digitally encoded header, attention signal, audio announcement, and digitally encoded end-of-message marker.

FEMA, in partnership with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is responsible for implementation, maintenance, and operations of the EAS at the federal level. The President has sole responsibility for determining when the national-level EAS will be activated. FEMA is responsible for national-level EAS, tests, and exercises.

### **What is the future for PEP Stations?**

The national-level alert and warning system is an important component in being prepared as a nation for any event or catastrophe. Resilient public alert and warning supports the National Preparedness Goal Protection and Mitigation mission areas. Timely warning to the public contributes to protecting our citizens and reduces the loss of life and property thereby lessening the impact of future disasters. Broadcast radio is the back bone of resilient public alerting and the FEMA IPAWS PMO, in cooperation with the broadcast industry partners will continue to support and maintain Primary Entry Point (PEP) Stations throughout the United States and its territories.



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