

Event Code Descriptions for Use with IPAWS

These Non-Weather Emergency Message (NWEM) event codes are available to state, local, tribal and territorial Alerting Authorities for use with the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS). The weather-related event codes, not listed here, are reserved for the National Weather Service. Use of these event codes by Alerting Authorities depends on established IPAWS permissions. The codes may be used with EAS, WEA, and/or NWEM except where indicated.

ADR – Administrative Message

A non-emergency message that provides updated information about an event in progress, an event that has expired or concluded early, pre-event preparation or mitigation activities, post-event recovery operations, or other administrative matters pertaining to the Emergency Alert System. **(EAS & NWEM only)**

AVA – Avalanche Watch

Conditions are favorable or expected but not imminent or occurring. The purpose of an Avalanche Watch is to warn the public that Avalanche Warning criteria are likely to be met in 24-48 hours. **(EAS & NWEM only)**

AVW – Avalanche Warning

Conditions are imminent or occurring.

BLU – Blue Alert

A message issued by state and local authorities to warn the public when there is actionable information, related to a law enforcement officer who is missing, seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, or when there is an imminent, credible threat to an officer. A Blue Alert could quickly warn the public if a violent suspect may be in your community, along with providing instructions on what to do if the suspect is spotted and how to stay safe.

CAE – Child Abduction Emergency

An emergency message, based on established criteria, about a missing child believed to be abducted. A local or state law enforcement agency investigating the abduction will describe the missing child, provide a description of the suspect or vehicle, and ask the public to notify the requesting agency if they have any information on the whereabouts of the child or suspect.



CDW – Civil Danger Warning

A warning of an event that presents a danger to a significant civilian population. The CDW, which usually warns of a specific hazard and gives specific protective action, has a higher priority than the Local Area Emergency (LAE). Examples include contaminated water supply and imminent or in-progress military or terrorist attack. Public protective actions could include evacuation, shelter in place or other actions (such as boiling contaminated water or seeking medical treatment).

CEM – Civil Emergency Message

An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE), but the hazard is less specific than the Civil Danger Warning (CDW). For example, the CEM could be used to describe a change in the Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat.

DMO – Practice/Demo Warning

A demonstration or test message used for particular purposes as established in state, local, tribal, or territorial EAS plans. Purposes may include testing of a siren system or audio quality checks.

EQW – Earthquake Warning

A warning of current or imminent earthquake activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.

EVI – Immediate Evacuation

A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local, tribal, or territorial ordinance. As an example, authorized officials may recommend the evacuation of affected areas due to an approaching tropical cyclone. In the event a flammable or explosive gas is released, authorized officials may recommend evacuation of designated areas where casualties or property damage from a vapor cloud explosion or fire may occur.

FRW – Fire Warning

A warning of a spreading wildfire or structure fire that threatens a populated area. Evacuation of areas in the fire's path may be recommended by authorized officials according to state law or local ordinance.

HMW – Hazardous Materials Warning

A warning of a release of non-radioactive hazardous material (such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent) that may recommend evacuation (for an explosion, fire, or oil spill hazard) or shelter in place (for a toxic fume hazard).

LAE – Local Area Emergency

An emergency message that defines an event that by itself does not pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials. Examples include: a disruption in water, electric or natural gas service, road closures due to excessive snowfall, or a potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.

LEW – Law Enforcement Warning

A warning of a bomb explosion, riot or other criminal event (e.g. a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways or facilities, evacuate or deny access to affected areas, and arrest violators or suspicious persons.

NUW – Nuclear Power Plant Warning

A warning of an event at a nuclear power plant, classified as a Site Area Emergency or General Emergency as classified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). A Site Area Emergency is confined to the plant site; no off-site impact is expected. Typically, a General Emergency is confined to an area less than a 10-mile radius around the plant. Authorized officials may recommend evacuation or medical treatment of exposed persons in nearby areas.

RHW – Radiological Hazard Warning

A warning of the loss, discovery or release of a radiological material. Examples include: the theft of a radioactive isotope used for medical, seismic, or other purposes; the discovery of radioactive materials; a transportation (aircraft, truck or rail, etc.) accident which may involve nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, or radioactive wastes. Authorized officials may recommend protective actions to be taken if a radioactive hazard is discovered.

RMT – Required Monthly Test

A test message that is typically pre-scheduled and coordinated state- or region-wide on an annual basis. RMTs are generally originated by a pre-designated local or state primary station, a state emergency management agency. RMTs must be relayed by broadcast stations and cable channels. RMTs must be performed between 8:30 a.m. and local sunset during odd numbered months, and between local sunset and 8:30 a.m. during even numbered months. Received monthly tests must be retransmitted within 60 minutes of receipt. Additionally, an RMT should not be scheduled or conducted during an event of great importance such as a pre-announced Presidential speech, coverage of a national/local election, major local or national news coverage outside regularly scheduled newscast hours or a major national sporting event such as the Super Bowl or World Series, with other events such as the Indianapolis 500 and Olympic Games mentioned in individual EAS state plans. **(EAS & WEA only)**

RWT – Required Weekly Test

A test message that consists, at a minimum, of the header and end-of-message tones. Though an RWT does not need an audio or graphic message announcing the test, many stations provide them as a courtesy to the public. In addition, television stations are not required to transmit a video message for weekly tests. RWTs are scheduled by

the station on random days and times during weeks when there is no Required Monthly Test scheduled. Broadcast and cable operators generally do not relay incoming RWTs. EAS RWTs may be originated by state and local alerting authorities to confirm the operational status of their IPAWS Live alerting software configuration without fear of interrupting broadcast or cable programming. **(EAS & WEA only)**

SPW – Shelter in Place Warning

A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place (go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information). An example is the release of hazardous materials where toxic fumes or radioactivity may affect designated areas.

TOE – 911 Telephone Outage Emergency

An emergency message that defines a local or state 911 telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange. Authorized officials may provide alternate phone numbers with which to reach 911 or dispatch personnel.

VOW – Volcano Warning

A warning of current or imminent volcanic activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.

Reference for this document: National Weather Service (2019). National Weather Service Instruction 10-518, Non-Weather Emergency Products Specification. Retrieved from <https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01005018curr.pdf>

For more information visit <https://www.fema.gov/ipaws>. Contact the IPAWS Program Management Office at ipaws@fema.dhs.gov.

The Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) is FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts, to radio and television via the Emergency Alert System, and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio.