

# EAS TAB 24

## LECC GUIDELINES

7.6.16

### INTRODUCTION

LECC stands for Local Emergency Communications Committee. The term originated with the FCC many years ago as part of its efforts to provide structure for the then-new Emergency Alert System (EAS).

The Washington State EAS Plan calls for an LECC in each of the operational areas in the State. These committees are the steering bodies for Public Warning Systems in each of these areas. LECCs work with the State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) and are part of that body.

These guidelines are established to help LECCs understand their role in EAS and related public warning systems.

### LECC COMPOSITION

The goal of the LECC is to routinely communicate, electronically and in-person, the formulation of public warning policies and procedures governing the use of EAS, as well as other systems used to warn the public of dangers to life and property.

Stakeholders in this process include government agencies that are sources of public warning messages, plus those associated with the systems used to communicate those messages to the public. It cannot be emphasized enough that EAS in Washington State is a cooperative effort.

Each operational area (see the Washington State EAS Plan for description of operational areas) may include one or more counties and cities, radio, television, and cable systems and other entities that are unique to that operational area. There are no defined parties. Representation on the LECC shall be determined by the members of the LECC, with the goal of making sure that all parties involved in public warning in the operational area are represented.

Typically, LECCs include representatives from the follow sources of information:

- County and, where applicable, city governments, emergency management, law enforcement, 911 centers (PSAPS), and other entities as determined by the LECC.

LECCs also include representatives from entities whose systems directly reach the public:

- Radio and TV broadcast stations, cable systems, telephone companies, wireless carriers, etc.

It should be a goal of the LECC to seek broadcast station program management participation, not just engineering. Decision makers should be encouraged to be part of the organization.

Other entities and organizations may wish to be a part of an LECC. For example, Amateur Radio groups, industrial facilities, and disaster relief organizations.

The SECC does not appoint parties to an LECC. Those decisions are left to the stakeholders in the LECC.

The LECC has additional responsibilities as part of the overall Washington State EAS/Public Warning System, as determined by the SECC and the LECC.

### STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been demonstrated that the functions of an LECC are not a one-person job. It is vital that tasks and responsibilities be spread among the stakeholders. This assures ownership of the processes by all participants. And with a distributed workload, no one person should find that working with and for the Committee is a burden.

Some recommendations for specific areas of responsibility:

- The committee should have a chair and a vice-chair. These officers are responsible for conducting meetings. They are also the primary contact persons for the committee. The LECC Chair is automatically a member of the Washington SECC.
- An administrative assistant. Duties include providing a written record of meetings, maintaining the roster of members, and conducting correspondence.
- A technical committee, assigned to resolve technical issues as a resource to the LECC and its members. The technical committee is also usually responsible for maintenance and operation of any Analog/Legacy Local Relay Network (LRN) systems.
- A person should be appointed to keep track of all FCC-licensed facilities in the operational area, functioning as a liaison to the party who works with the SECC to create and maintain Monitoring Assignments.
- A liaison to the SECC. This can be the chair or another person designated by the LECC. His or her responsibility is to ensure ongoing communication between the LECC and the SECC.

### REGULAR MEETINGS

- The LECC should meet at regular intervals, using a location or locations mutually agreeable to stakeholders. Where geography is an issue, meetings may be conducted completely or in part via electronic means.
- LECC meetings should not conflict with meetings of the SECC, which are typically held in January, March, May, July, Sept and November.
- The LECC is welcome to use the Washington State EAS Remailer for the purpose of making meeting announcements, distribution of minutes, and other communications deemed appropriate by the SECC.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

The goal is to have all stakeholders work to develop and maintain a local EAS/Public Warning Plan. This plan should spell out in detail:

- When public warning systems should be used and how to use them. For instance, EAS (Legacy and CAP) FEMA/IPAWS, WEA, "Reverse 911," etc.
- When and how to use the various Event Codes as specified in the Washington State EAS Plan, Tab 8.
- The LECC is an advisory body that, in cooperation with local emergency managers, relevant governmental agencies, and broadcasters, recommends best practices for determining when and how to issue and disseminate local EAS alerts.

The LECC plan is an active document and should be kept up to date at all times. The local plan is to be available online, with the URL communicated to the SECC for inclusion on its Website, and to be provided in printed form for those who prefer a physical copy.

The LECC is encouraged to use the State EAS Plan format (available on-line at WSEM) as a model to insure consistency within the State. All such plans shall be submitted to the SECC for its approval.

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS – THE DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

Many years ago when the Washington State EAS Plan was being developed, it was determined that the plan would be housed in a 3-ring binder and consist of two major segments: First, the EAS Plan policy narrative; second, a series of tabs containing specific information subject to frequent changes. This eliminates the need to duplicate the entire volume each time a change is made. The LECC Plan is to be configured such that it can be printed and placed in a binder, like the Washington State Plan).

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS – THE CONTENTS

The local operational area plan should contain the following items:

- An explanation of the plan.
  - The goal is to have a document that anyone can read and grasp exactly how the systems work in the area.
  - Roster of all members of the LECC, using the WaState Plan Tab 1 or 2 as a model.
- An easy-to-understand list of who is authorized to initiate EAS and/or public warning messages within the operational area.
- A section showing the various public warning systems, including when and how they are to be used, while respecting government agency relationships.
- A current list of the applicable State EAS Plan Tab 10 (monitoring assignments)
- A link to the State EAS Plan.
- Other documents as deemed helpful and appropriate by the LECC.

## EMERGENCY MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION METHODS

There are three message distribution methods in each Operational Area

### Digital

Messages are generated by a designated government entity , utilizing the Common Alerting Protocol, that are distributed to EAS Participants via FEMA/IPAWS and/or The Washington State CAP System. These systems usually utilize a 'front-end' system from a commercial vendor.

### Analog via an LRN

Messages are generated by a designated government entity, utilizing a device capable of generating a message utiizing the SAME system, which is distributed to EAS Participants via a Local Relay Network.

Creation of and maintenance and operational readiness of the Local Relay Network is the responsibility of the LECC.

### Analog via an LP

Messages are generated by a designated government entity, utilizing a device capable of generating a message utiizing the SAME system, which then sent to a Local Primary, which is responsible for distribution to EAS Participants via an off-air monitoring arrangement.

The LECC is responsible for management and routine/periodic testing of these systems.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Citizens are told with every test of the EAS that they will receive official information if there is an emergency. The LECC is encouraged to work with existing government public affairs departments, as well as the print and electronic media, to inform the public of the work of the LECC, what it means, and to help citizens understand the system. LECCs are encouraged to work with local speakers' bureaus and other entities to help spread the word about the work of coordinating public warnings.

## TRAINING

Training must be an ongoing process and include all partners dealing with public warning. Emergency managers, dispatch centers, and other parties authorized by the LECC to originate EAS/public warning messages need to be carefully trained in all aspects of public warning systems, especially in the newer systems.

## TESTING

The FCC Requires that all broadcast licensees perform specific tests of of EAS. The SECC provides the opportunity for each operational area to participate in testing at the local level. The LECC's responsibility is to ensure that local authorities originate scheduled tests. Duties should be assigned on a rotating basis to make sure staff members are trained and ready to complete these duties during an emergency.

### HOW TO CHOOSE A LOCAL PRIMARY

In the event the Operational Area does not have a fully functional LRN, it may elect to utilize a Local Primary facility to perform the task of relaying public warning messages to EAS Participants. Should the LECC be faced with having to select a new broadcast facility to function as an LP (Local Primary) as either an LP1 or LP2, the following guidelines are designed to assist the committee in that process.

- In this document, the term “LP” means “Local Primary” and should not be confused with the term LP used to describe a low-power broadcast station.
- An LP2 is a redundant facility.
- A LP or Local Primary facility is usually, but not always, a broadcast station within an Operational Area that other stations in that area monitor for National or Local EAS Messages.
- The main difference between an LP and other stations within an area is what they monitor. LPs are to monitor multiple sources of National Level EAS messages, in accordance with Tabs 5 and 6 of the State Plan.
- The FCC requires that all broadcast stations must relay all National Level EAS messages in real-time. However there is no FCC regulation governing the forwarding of other public warning messages. The LECC should receive assurances from the LP facility that they will forward all locally generated EAS messages with minimum delay.
- Some facilities may be operating un-attended during certain times, with their EAS equipment in Automatic Mode. The LECC should fully understand how messages presented to these facilities are handled when operating in this mode.
- Once a decision is made by the LECC creating a new LP for an operational area, that decision must be conveyed to the SECC for inclusion in the Monitoring Matrix (Tabs 5 & 6)

## WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING AN LP?

This decision is based on several factors, and a comparative scoring-matrix is suggested. The facility having the highest score would typically be the LP1 and the second highest would be the LP2.

The following are some elements that should be considered and entered into the scoring matrix.

➤ Hours of Operation

Public warning messages require a 24/7/365 delivery system. If a broadcast station is used, it must be one that operates continuously. This eliminates consideration of daytime-only stations (those that sign off at local sunset) and those that normally cease transmission at a specific hour.

Note – Many AM broadcast stations either reduce power or use a directional antenna system during hours of darkness. This factor affects coverage and must be considered in making decisions.
--

➤ Coverage

The mission of an LP is to relay EAS Messages to broadcasters, cable systems, etc. within an Operational Area. So an LP must have the coverage permitting this. Required coverage will vary with the size of the Operational Area.

➤ Level of cooperation

The facility should be willing to be actively participate in the distribution of public warning messages for the Operational Area and provide assurance of that to the LECC.

➤ Required equipment

The facility should have, or be willing to purchase, additional equipment necessary to fulfill the mission of an LP

➤ Redundancy

Being able to fulfill the function of an LP during adverse conditions is a plus. Facilities that have redundant capabilities should be scored higher.

➤ Auxiliary Power

Emergency power generation for the equipment to maintain service during times of power outages is a must.

- Does the facility have Auxiliary Power at studio and transmitter locations?
- How long can it operate without commercial power before fuel must be resupplied?

➤ Auxiliary equipment

Does the facility have sufficient redundant equipment to maintain operation if there are failures to its primary equipment?

➤ Co-Location Issues

Co-Location of an LP1 and LP2 is highly discouraged.

➤ Facility survivability

Particularly in Western Washington, this factor should be seriously considered in choosing an LP. For example, facilities in areas prone to flooding should be on high ground.

- The LECC should be careful not to avoid a good LP station while waiting for a great one. There are many stations that don't have ideal redundancy, but should be encouraged to become LPs. Willingness is the first quality we should seek.

AMENDMENTS TO THIS DOCUMENT

As is the case with all documents and/or Tabs used with the Washington State EAS Plan, this document can be changed, updated, or improved as required. All such changes shall be subject to the review of all EAS Participants within the State of Washington with final approval resting with the SECC.