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# National Weather Service and changes to the Emergency Alert System (EAS)

August 19, 2002

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on February 26, 2002, issued a Report and Order (R&O) amending the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules. The R&O became effective May 16, 2002.
- The FCC adopted a critical provision permitting broadcasters to preselect the state and local EAS messages they wish to display and log, giving broadcasters the ability to reduce unknown event code operator alarms and unnecessary log entries.
- The FCC also adopted numerous new civil emergency, weather and natural disaster event codes and NWS' marine area location codes.
- Broadcaster's EAS encoder/decoder equipment must be upgraded to implement many of the changes in this R&O. If EAS equipment is not upgraded, the newly adopted event codes will cause unknown event code operator alarms.
- **NWS will implement new codes in 2003 with months of advance notice after broadcasters have opportunity to upgrade EAS encoder/decoder equipment.**
- NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) and the EAS use the same digital protocols, and NWR is the primary means for NWS alerts to activate the Emergency Alert System.
- NWS invites your input to NWS implementation plans. Please write comments to Herb White, NWS Dissemination Services Manager, at [Herb.White@noaa.gov](mailto:Herb.White@noaa.gov) and Chris Alex, Dissemination Services Meteorologist, at [Christine.Alex@noaa.gov](mailto:Christine.Alex@noaa.gov).
- Check online at [www.nws.noaa.gov/om/NWS\\_EAS.htm](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/NWS_EAS.htm) for new information as NWS refines plans to introduce the new event and marine area location codes.

### Related web sites:

NWS Home Page . . . . . <http://www.weather.gov> or <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>  
 NOAA Weather Radio Home Page . . . . . <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>  
 NWS EAS Information Web Page . . . . . [http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/NWS\\_EAS.htm](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/NWS_EAS.htm)  
 FCC EAS Report and Order . . . . . <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/Orders/2002/FCC-02-64A1.html>