

Non-weather Related Emergency Message Description Guidelines

Background

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on February 22, 2002, adopted a Report and Order (FCC-02-64) giving local and state Emergency Alert System (EAS) committees the option of utilizing new event codes for non-weather related events. (The FCC Report and Order can be downloaded from the FCC's Electronic Document Management System (EDOCS) at: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/.)

Non-weather Related Emergency Messages (NWEM)

This section provides NOAA/National Weather Service (NWS) recommended definitions of non-weather related events that are currently relayed by the NWS via text products and NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) All Hazards broadcasts. These definitions are available to Local- and State- Emergency Communication Committees (LECC and SECC, respectively).

Local, county, and state warning-alerting officials will need to work with their local NWS office to establish procedures for relaying NWEMs to the NWS for broadcast.

For a full listing of EAS codes and their respective NWS product identifiers, please see the following website: http://www.weather.gov/os/eas_codes.shtml

ACRONYM	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
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.
AVA	Avalanche Watch	A message issued by authorized officials when conditions are forecast to become favorable for natural or human-triggered avalanches that could affect roadways, structures, or backcountry activities.
AVW	Avalanche Warning	A warning of current or imminent avalanche activity when avalanche danger is considered high or extreme. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance when natural or human-triggered avalanches are likely to affect roadways, structures, or backcountry activities.

CAE* (see note below table)	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.
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	Evacuation Immediate	A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local 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 structural 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 the release of a 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).
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.

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.
NMN	Network Message Notification	Not yet defined and not in the suite of products for relay by NWS.
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 alternative phone numbers in which to reach 911 or dispatch personnel.
NUW	Nuclear Power Plant Warning	A warning of an event at a nuclear power plant classified such 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 hazard. 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.
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.
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.

Note: In Wisconsin, the CAE message is **not** broadcast or tone-alerted on NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards transmitter signals. Instead, the CAE message is broadcast via Wisconsin's Public Radio system.

Additionally, the broadcast and tone-alerting of AVA, AVW, and VOW messages on the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards network in Wisconsin is highly unlikely due to Wisconsin's geographic characteristics.

This document is adapted from the web site of the Lubbock, TX, NWS Forecast Office.