# IPAWS TIP
### Integrated Public Alert and Warning System

## TIP #27:
## WEA Testing…Which Event Code?

As Hurricane season is officially upon us (June 1st – November 30th), being prepared to send emergency messages, and being comfortable using IPAWS, will greatly reduce the time needed in getting out important alerts.

The Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) enhancements of December 2019 include the ability to send WEA test messages, similar to the routine tests of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). State/Local WEA Tests are a new test category that perform like any other WEA alert, with the exception that only wireless subscribers who "opt in" to tests will receive them.

WEA testing allows you to assess the effectiveness of WEAs in your jurisdiction without disrupting the public while gaining confidence and proficiency. We encourage state and local emergency managers to use State/Local WEA Tests for end-to-end WEA testing, using the Required Weekly Test (RWT) event code.

## About Event Codes

Event codes behave differently in WEA and EAS and each have different meanings in the emergency management profession and the broadcast industry. Consider as our examples: Required Weekly Test (RWT), Required Monthly Test (RMT), and Demonstration Message (DMO). Both RWT and RMT are specific to EAS. Outside of the broadcast and cable industries these terms don't really mean what the names suggest.

Radio, TV stations, and cable operators are required to broadcast at least one EAS message per week. If there are no EAS activations, that's where the RWT comes in, a station will originate a RWT in lieu of an actual EAS message. When a station or cable operator receives a RWT they only create a log entry, and do not forward the test to the public. This characteristic makes RWT an excellent event code to use to ensure that your IPAWS Live access is working. As an added best practice, let your local broadcasters know that you are sending a WEA test using RWT and this will help build and maintain these relationships within this industry.

For WEA, we have been working with alert origination software providers to ensure that if an alerting authority uses RWT for WEA, the resulting Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) message will include the WEA Test handling code*. This will cause the resulting WEA

message to appear only on those wireless handsets where the user has opted-in to receive State/Local Test messages. However, this does not mean that as an alerting authority you are required to test WEA every week.

Required Monthly Tests (RMTs) are used for state or region-wide coordinated monthly EAS Tests. Each state typically establishes an annual RMT schedule designating one or more originating agencies within the state to launch each month's RMT. Stations have 59 minutes to forward a received RMT to the public.

You don't want to practice using an RMT in IPAWS because if you make a mistake and send an EAS RMT Live, you may disrupt local broadcast schedules that are set to strict timelines. Therefore, if your agency is not the designated RMT originating agency in the State EAS Plan, you should not send an EAS RMT.

**In summary:**

- **Required Weekly Test (RWT)**
    - Not broadcasted by radio/TV stations, and cable operators
    - <u>Best</u> and <u>safest</u> option to avoid public disruption and mistakes

- **Required Monthly Test (RMT)**
    - Mandatory broadcast by radio/TV stations and cable operators (within 59 minutes of receipt)
    - Risks EAS activation if EAS channel is accidentally included in WEA test

- **Demonstration Message (DMO)**
    - Outlined in state EAS plans
    - Used for specific purposes (e.g., siren system testing, EAS audio quality, etc.)

*If you are unsure of your software's capabilities, please check with your software provider.

We encourage practicing in the IPAWS Lab Cloud Environment before any live test. Additionally, for more information, including recommendations and considerations, please view our webinar on this topic:

[Webinar Recording]