

TIP 35: Test, Training, and Exercising Your IPAWS Capabilities

The IPAWS Program Management Office (PMO), in collaboration with FEMA's National Exercise Division (NED), brings you the IPAWS/Public Information and Warning After Action Trend Analysis, the IPAWS Exercise Starter Kit, and Exercise Support from the IPAWS Lab.

IPAWS Trend Analysis

The National Exercise Division (NED) performed a trend analysis of Strengths and *Areas for Improvement (AFI)* related to the cross-cutting Public Information and Warning core capability and IPAWS. NED analyzed 303 exercise and real-world findings from 203 after action reports (AARs) written between 2018 – 2020 aligned to the Public Information and Warning core capability, including a focused analysis on IPAWS-related strengths and AFIs.

A significantly higher number of AFI findings aligned to the Planning Area, suggesting that jurisdictions may need more support in developing plans and procedures relating to the Public Information and Warning core capability. This finding directly supported the development of the IPAWS Exercise Starter Kit (ESK).

IPAWS Exercise Starter Kit

Coming in April 2021, The IPAWS ESK will provide stakeholders across the whole community with ready-to-use materials and templates to develop, conduct, and evaluate exercises tailored to their specific threats, resources, operational plans, and procedures.

The IPAWS ESK will contain sample documents organizations can customize to conduct their own exercises on essential aspects of public alert and warning.

When released, the IPAWS ESK will be found on the [Preparedness Toolkit](#) (PrepToolkit). An online portal that provides the whole community with the tools and resources to aid in implementing the National Preparedness System. PrepToolkit provides a vehicle to execute preparedness activities efficiently and easily and coordinate and collaborate with partners.

Why Use the IPAWS ESK?

FEMA develops ESKs that align with the National Exercise Program Principals' Strategic Priorities. Each kit includes sample Facilitator/Evaluator Guide, sample Conduct Slides, sample Situation Manual (SitMan), sample Placemat, and sample Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

An ESK also includes potential discussion questions as part of the Facilitator/Evaluator Guide that can be tailored to your organization's unique needs and missions.



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Who Can Use the ESKs?

Anyone. Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, and Local (FSTTL) Emergency Management Exercise Officers and Alerting Authorities are encouraged to collaborate and coordinate the integration of IPAWS capabilities into existing exercises. This partnership can increase proficiency and build confidence in using the system, while identifying gaps for enhanced improvements.

Exercise planners and Alerting Authorities will benefit from the increased involvement of IPAWS capabilities into training and exercise initiatives by the inclusion of all individuals authorized to operate alert origination tools and send alerts to the public. Test, training, and exercises for alert originators ensure greater proficiency and reduce the number of false alerts that detract from public confidence. Planners should also ensure that proficiency in alert and warning is included in readiness training.

IPAWS Lab and Exercise Support

The IPAWS Lab supports the integration of IPAWS alert and warning capabilities into all levels of FSTTL exercises, from Seminars and Workshops to Functional and Full-Scale Exercises. So why exercise IPAWS?

- Familiarize yourself and personnel with IPAWS
- Validate IPAWS use and effectiveness
- Review and assess alert and warning policies and procedures
- Evaluate personnel capabilities
- Expose areas where IPAWS can be incorporated
- Identify gaps for improvement

IPAWS Lab exercise support includes access to a closed and safe environment, best practice recommendations, assessment of alerting tool functionality, verification of alert receipt, pre-test planning, identifying objectives, MSEL development, execution, and exercise evaluation.

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IPAWS Tips at Your Fingertips

Find all Tips from 2018 to the present, in [IPAWS Tips](#) on the FEMA website. Share your ideas and suggestions for future Tips with the IPAWS PMO at fema-ipaws-stakeholder-engagement@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.