



IPAWS FACT SHEET



What is IPAWS?

- Integrated Public Alerts and Warning System (IPAWS) is a National System to facilitate Local Alerting
 - Allows local authorities to send geo-targeted emergency alerts from their jurisdictions.
 - Alerts are broadcast to the public through:
 - Radio and TV via the Emergency Alert System (EAS) (triggers EAS tones, text to voice message over radio and text crawl across TV screens)
 - Cellular phones via a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) (will send a compliant message to all Cell Towers within the alert area.)
 - NOAA All Hazards National Weather Radio (NWR) via IPAWS-NOAA gateway (a work in progress at the national level)
 - Internet applications and websites that subscribe to the IPAWS All Hazard Information Feed. (i.e reader boards that are controlled via the internet.)
 - Alerts are for anything public safety officials determine is a threat to public safety and will alert ALL citizens in a given area.

What IPAWS is NOT

- Not a subscription-based mass notification system
- Not an Emergency Telephone Notification system or reverse dial phone system (Reverse 9-1-1)
- Not a paging or limited distribution notification system (e.g. can't send unique information to a select group)

Does IPAWS replace the system I already have in place?

- The use of IPAWS is optional, and may supplement your existing systems; ***however, IPAWS is the only means to disseminate warnings (non-weather) to cellular telephones.***

Why do I need to buy software to use IPAWS?

- All messages that are broadcast via the IPAWS platform must be generated with software that can create IPAWS-compliant messages. FEMA does not endorse any company; they do provide a list of companies that have an MOA with FEMA for testing http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/ipaws/open_developers.pdf

What is a COG?

- A Collaborating Operating Group or (COG) is a term used by IPAWS to designate an organization that is responsible for emergency alerting. A COG is established with IPAWS when a Federal, State, local, or tribal alerting authority executes an MOA with FEMA in order to use IPAWS. A COG may be a stand-alone department within a city or county, the entire county, or multiple counties operating as one large COG.

What Should I look for when selecting a vendor?

- The decision to use IPAWS may be unique to each jurisdiction. Many simply want the ability to quickly trigger an EAS message for all non-weather hazards; others want to enhance their alerting ability to additionally send Wireless alerts.
 - **Before attempting to select a vendor consider:**
 - What capabilities you already have that you want to keep (subscription mass-notification for low level alerts, group paging, reverse phone messaging, etc.)
 - What capabilities you want to enhance
 - Who will have alerting authority within your jurisdiction?
- Every IPAWS vendor will, at a minimum, be able to trigger IPAWS alerts giving local authorities access to streamline the process of issuing emergency public alerts through various channels. All software requires a reliable internet connection.
- Many IPAWS vendors will offer additional features with their product that may be of interest to local government, including but not limited to:
 - Reverse phone messages (AKA Reverse 9-1-1)
 - Subscription, opt-in, mass notification tools for unique message configurations
 - Mobile applications for the software
 - Custom map configurations
 - Social Media integration
- Cost of IPAWS compliant software will vary depending on many factors including but not limited to:
 - Size/population of the alerting jurisdiction (COG)
 - Number of licensed users
 - Additional features
 - Yearly vs long term agreement with vendor

How do I get authorized to use IPAWS?

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/32848>

- Obtain software from a vendor that has an MOA with FEMA for IPAWS testing
- Complete the MOA application process with IPAWS to establish a COG
 - Complete application for public alerting authority, specify types of alerts and apply for Haz-collect permissions.
- Send application to MT DES for state approval
- Complete application with FEMA
 - Provide documentation of IPAWS training for all alert originators within the COG to FEMA
- Once application is processed and approved, you will receive a digital certificate that enables your COG to issue alerts through IPAWS.

Additional resources:

- <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31865>
- <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/86098>
- <https://www.fema.gov/informational-materials#wcm-survey-target-id>