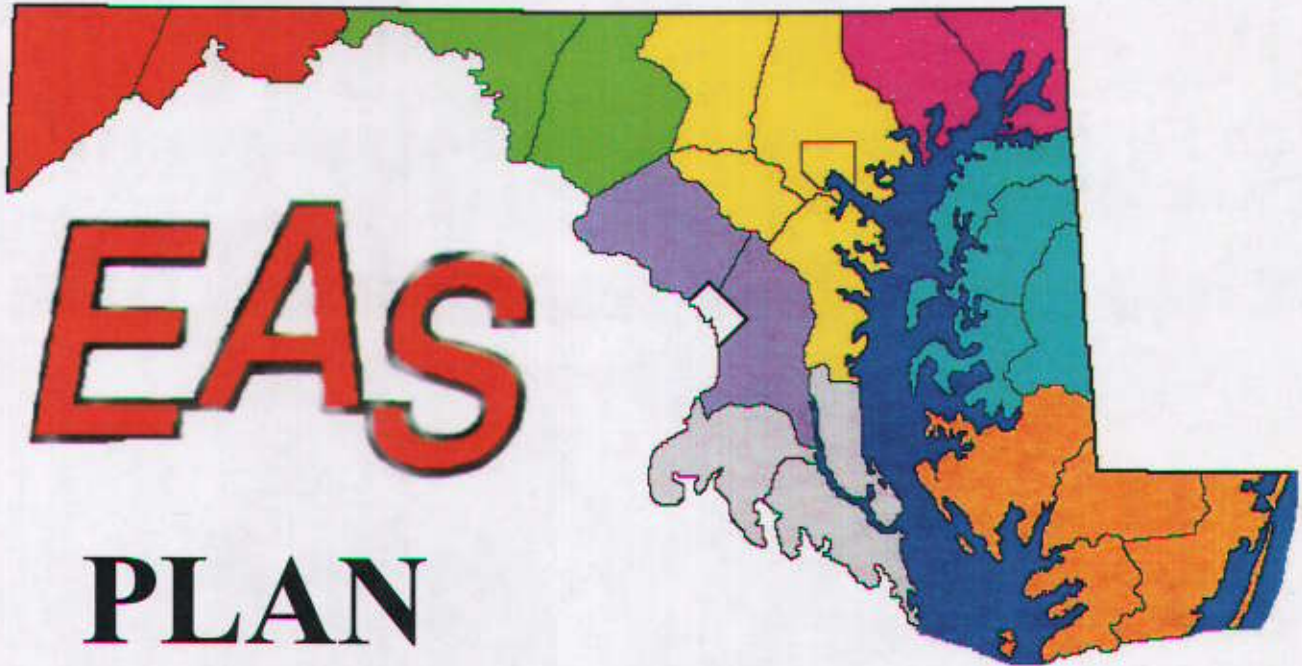
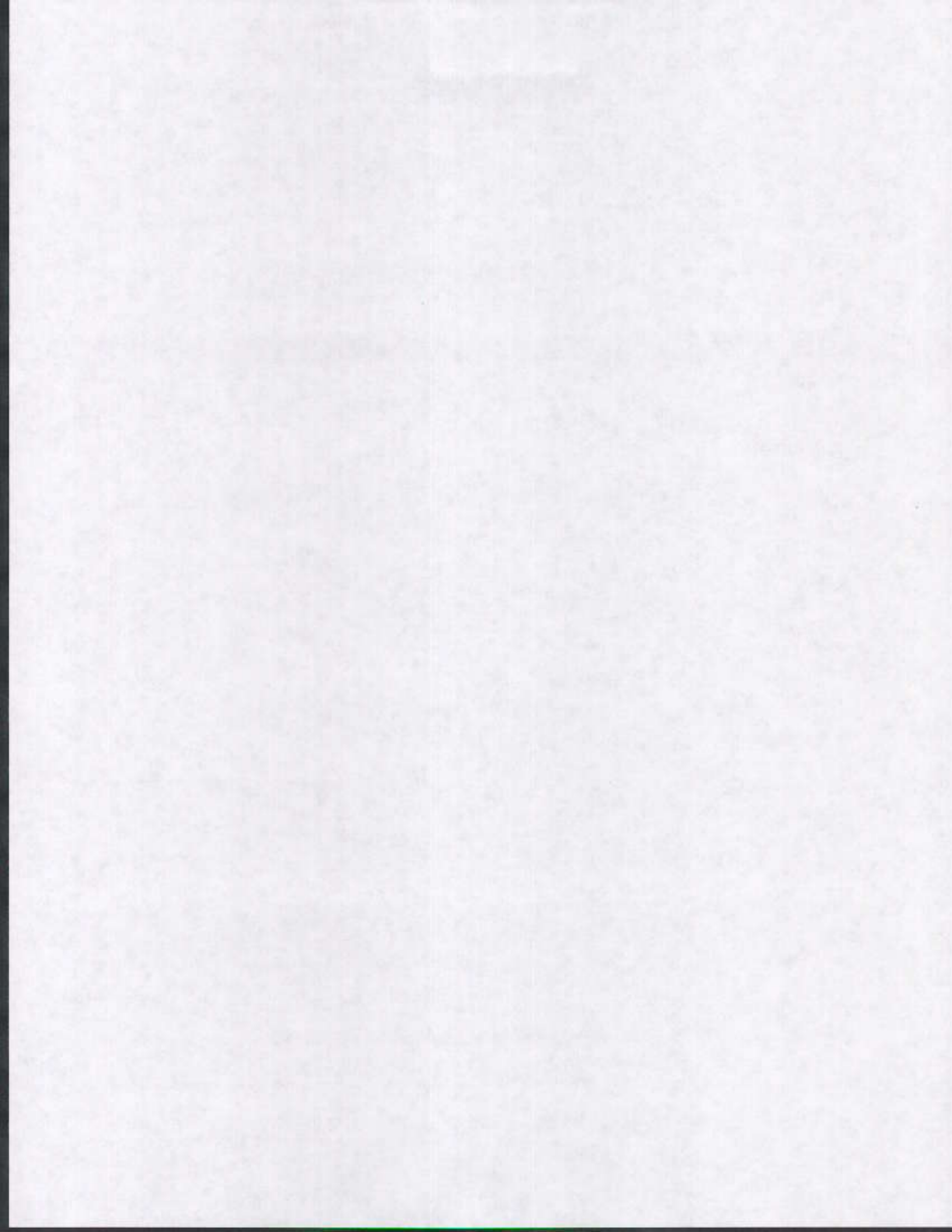


# THE MARYLAND STATE



**Rules for Activating the  
Emergency Alert System in Maryland  
for Broadcasters, Cable Operators,  
Emergency Managers and Others  
Concerned with Public Warning.**

The Maryland State Emergency Communications Committee  
January 2006



# *Maryland State EAS Plan*

## **Annexes -**

- Annex 01 - LP Monitoring Assignments**
- Annex 02 - State Relay Network**
- Annex 03 - NOAA Weather Radio Monitoring Assignments**
  - Annex 03 Appendix 1 – NOAA MOU for CEMs**
- Annex 04 - Required Monthly Test Schedule (RMT)**
- Annex 05 - RMT Test Scripts Approved for Use**
- Annex 06 - Child Abduction Event Procedures for Maryland Child AMBER Alerts**
- Annex 07 - Local EAS Plan – Local EAS Plan Model**
- Annex 08 - EAS Events and Maryland Automation Event Settings**
- Annex 09 - Maryland FIPS Codes**
- Annex 10 - Training Recommendations**
- Annex 11 - Terms and Definitions Used in this Plan**
- Annex 12 - FCC Rule Changes and Digital Inclusion**
- Annex 13 - Members of the Maryland State Emergency Communications Committee**

## Intent and Purpose of this Plan

### Overview

This plan is the FCC-mandated document outlining the organization and implementation of the State of Maryland Emergency Alert System (EAS). It is a guideline for Maryland broadcasters and cable TV operators and determines how to relay emergency information/instructions for emergencies throughout the State. The document details specific procedures for testing, issuing, and disseminating this emergency information.

This Plan is an adjunct to the FCC EAS Rules and is not meant to be a summary, in whole or in part, of those Rules. FCC Rules, Part 11, contain the general rules regarding the Emergency Alert System. Stations can download FCC Emergency Alert System (EAS) AM/FM and TV Handbooks and Part 11 rules via the World Wide Web from the FCC's Web Site: <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/eas/>. The handbook(s) contains basic operational procedures for national, state, and local activations, testing procedures, and script samples that may be used by stations.

### Plan Summary

The following sections in this plan covers

- Monitoring assignments for each station/cable operator – Annex 1.
- EAS Header codes and sequences.
- Required Weekly and Monthly Tests.
  - Local Tests are to be made once weekly, on random days, at random *times*.
  - The once monthly statewide test will be conducted on the last Wednesday of the month. See Annex 4 for the Maryland Statewide once monthly test times. (Also see FCC EAS Handbook).

It is highly recommended that all broadcast stations and cable systems add the National Weather Service's NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) as one of the inputs to their EAS decoder. Please refer to Annex 3 which has a coverage map and list of NWR transmitters, their locations, frequencies, and power.

Please note that Montgomery and Prince George's County stations, which were formerly in the District of Columbia's plan, now monitor two areas, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Those broadcast stations and cable systems will all monitor one DC station assigned by the DC plan with priority given to DC area activations. A second station will be assigned by the Maryland plan.

## NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL EAS

Per FCC EAS Rules, the EAS system's notification hierarchy places importance on the message transmitted in this order of priority: National, Local, and State.

### National EAS Participation

All broadcasters and cable operators are required by FCC rules to participate in the National-level EAS. In the event of National EAS activation, Participating National ("PN") stations and all cable operators would relay Presidential messages while Non-Participating National ("NN") stations would sign-off after making an announcement to notify listeners/viewers to tune to a local "PN" station for their area.

Part of the National Plan involves weekly and monthly testing of the EAS System. All stations/cable operators must transmit a Required Weekly EAS Test (RWT), and retransmit a Required Monthly Test (RMT) within 1 hour of reception via an EAS decoder.

### **State/Local EAS Participation**

Broadcast and Cable participation in the Maryland State or Local EAS is voluntary. Stations that elect to participate will follow the procedures in this plan.

### **Conditions of EAS Participation**

By participating in this plan, individual broadcast operations do not relinquish their ability to exercise independent action during any situation. These rights and responsibilities are granted to individual licensees per FCC Rules and Regulations. Those who do relay announcements/material from other stations do have all necessary rebroadcast authority per FCC rules and this plan.

### **National EAS Designations**

**National Primary (NP)** Primary source of all National EAS Alerts.

These stations along with the NWS and State EOC will receive and relay all National level EAS Alerts.

**Local Primary (LP-1)** Primary source of all local area EAS messages.

They will be relaying National, State, and Weather Alerts. These may also be the input point for Local EAS Alerts. In some areas, due to the size, there may be an LP-2 and LP-3 station to help cover the entire area.

**State Primary (SP)** is a source of EAS State messages. These messages can originate from the Governor or a designated representative in the State Emergency Operating Center (EOC) or State Capital. Messages are sent via the State Relay Network.

**State Relay (SR)** Primary source of all State EAS messages.

These stations will receive State level messages from the State EOC and NWS and will also relay all National level messages.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note: This is the official FCC designation and definition. This however has never been the practice in any of the previous MD State EBS or EAS plans. Our present daisy chain uses the LP stations for this function, and the stations with SR designation have performed basically a Local Relay (LR) function for stations too far away to reliably receive one of the LP station's signals for their area. The State Relay function would better be referred to as that of the State Relay Network. See Annex 2.

**Participating National (PN)**: Most broadcasters and cable operators are designated as "PN".

**Non-Participating National (NN)**: Broadcasters who hold an "NN" authorization from the FCC must sign off the air during a National Emergency.

## Maryland State Designations -

The following are other terms used in the organization of the Maryland EAS Plan.

**Local Relay (LR)**: A message outlet needed to complete the message chain. Here this refers to a broadcaster who is not an LP station designation, but who is needed to relay messages to a remote location so others further down the daisy chain can receive the messages.

**NWS**: The National Weather Service (NWS) encodes their alerts using the S.A.M.E. coding method as used by other originators of EAS. NWS will activate EAS through broadcasts over NOAA Weather Radio (NWR). As noted earlier, it is recommended that you monitor the NWR for your local area. See Annex 3 for a list of transmitters and their service areas. NWS will be able to also request EAS activation via EMNet and other wire services and telecommunication methods. (See below and Annex 3 for more information.)

**STATE EOC**: Maryland Emergency Management Agency. This will be the origination point for messages from the Governor.

## Maryland EAS-Specific Information

### FCC Mandated Event Codes

The FCC requires that broadcasters and cable operators program their EAS Decoders for the following events:

- "EAN" (National EAS Activation) - Must be re-transmitted immediately.
- "EAT" (National EAS Termination) - Must be re-transmitted immediately.
- "RMT" (Required Monthly Test) - containing your station's County FIPS code or State FIPS Code. Must be re-transmitted within 1 hour of receipt.
- "RWT" (Required Weekly Test) - containing the county FIPS code for your station's location of received test for that FIPS code area need only be logged. No re-broadcast is necessary.

See Annex 8 for more Event Codes Information

## EAS TESTS

### Required Weekly Tests

Required Weekly Tests are those transmitted by participating stations per FCC Rules and are beyond the scope of this document.

Note: The NWS transmits a weekly test (RWT) via all NWR transmitters every Wednesday between 11 am and noon. The only exception to this would be if real-time weather alerts are occurring, then no test is conducted.

### Required Monthly Tests

The once monthly Statewide test will be conducted on the last Wednesday of the month. For a list of Maryland Statewide once monthly test times, see Annex 4. All Statewide EAS tests must be broadcast by all stations and logged as a received state EAS test.

### DAYTIME Only Stations

Daytime only stations receiving an overnight RMT must log the test received in the appropriate manner, and rebroadcast within its valid duration after sign-on. If the time stamp of the RMT has expired, you should log it's receipt and send an RWT in place of the RMT in your first 15 minutes. Daytimers receiving an actual activation overnight must immediately rebroadcast the alert if the time stamp for that emergency is still valid, otherwise, you need only log the event in the appropriate manner that the activation has been received. As with any RWT you receive, daytimers receiving one while off air, need only log the test as received in an appropriate manner.

## AUTHORIZED SOURCES FOR ACTIVATING THE EAS STATE EAS ACTIVATION

Governor, State of Maryland

Director, Maryland Emergency Management Agency

Director's Designee, Maryland Emergency Management Agency

### Maryland EAS System Design and Implementation

State activations are designed around the EMNet system which will be rolled-out to participating stations starting in the first quarter of 2004. On May 24, 2004 the Maryland EMnet EAS system became fully operational. The EMnet system serves as another source of emergency information for participating stations. (See Annex 2 for details.)

- o State activations will originate from the State Emergency Operations Center.
- o Selected codes will be preset by each station for automatic activation in the event a station is automated. (See Annex 9 for details.)

- The system stays basically a daisy chain, however there is the ability for the state to enter the chain at any level. EMnet EAS eliminates the unreliable nature of the over-the-air daisy chain, but the daisy chain is still one of our State Relay system. (See Annex 2 for more details.)

### **Local Jurisdiction Activation**

- All local emergencies (other than weather alerts) shall be declared only by the local jurisdiction's Emergency Management Agency.
- Local Jurisdictions will go directly to their local LP Stations and other broadcasters. The State will monitor, but will not interfere or direct a local activation request unless requested by the Local Jurisdiction.
- Local Jurisdictions are also encouraged to use Maryland Emergency Management EMnet EAS State Relay Network for local activations and emergency messages when necessary. (For additional Local Activation information see the Local Plans in Annex 7.)

## **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**

The National Weather Service (NWS) has the mission of warning the public of impending weather and water hazards. One of the primary methods used by NWS is NOAA Weather Radio (NWR). There are four NWS Offices that service the State of Maryland that will issue watches, warnings, advisories and statements via NWR transmitters across Maryland (See Annex 3 for transmitters and area covered).

While broadcasters may receive all the weather codes listed in Annex 3 (also see Annex 8) only a subset of these codes from the NWS will request EAS activation. The text version of these warning messages say "BULLETIN – EAS ACTIVATION REQUESTED". The NWS requests EAS Activation on all Tornado Warnings (TOR) and Flash Flood Warning (FFW) messages. NWS asks that broadcasters set their equipment to automatically air these messages when stations are in automated mode.

All other coded messages will normally say "IMMEDIATE BROADCAST REQUESTED" in the text version. This is not an EAS activation. Under rare situations where other conditions pose an immediate, life-threatening danger to the public, the NWS may request EAS activation. In these cases, the text message will state "EAS ACTIVATION REQUESTED" and the local LP-1 station may receive a direct call from NWS to alert them of the message or a message/alert through EMnet.

NWS also has an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of Maryland to use NWR as an "All Hazards Warning Radio" using the Civil Emergency Message (CEM) event code. Other events will soon be available as the NWR system and State of Maryland MOU is updated. This allows the state and local jurisdictions to contact the NWS to help issue an EAS activation via NWR.

### **WEATHER EAS ALERTS**

National Weather Services will issue weather activations over the NWR and NWS system. When it becomes possible to arrange, this information will be available via EMnet EAS as well.