

**EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM  
LOCAL AREA PLAN FOR THE  
HOUSTON, TEXAS, OPERATIONAL AREA**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**I. OVERVIEW**

- A. Authority for the Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- B. Definition of an Emergency
- C. Technical Capabilities
- D. Summary of National EAS Plan
- E. Summary of Texas EAS Plan
- F. Summary of Local and State AMBER Alert Plans
- G. Purpose of Local Area Plan
- H. Counties within the Houston Operational Area

**II. LOCAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (LECC)**

- A. Membership
- B. Adoption or Amendment of Plan
- C. Voluntary Participation by Broadcast Stations and Cable Systems
- D. EAS Promotional and Public Service Announcements

**III. LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES**

- A. Designation of Local Primary Sources
- B. Responsibilities of Local Primary Sources

**IV. ACTIVATION PROCEDURES**

- A. Local Authorized Officials
- B. Local Activation Criteria
- C. Activation Requests by Telephone or Fax
- D. Public Information Emergency System (PIES)
- E. Activation Event Codes
- F. Format of Local EAS Messages

**V. MONITORING AND RE-BROADCAST**

- A. Monitoring Assignments
- B. Re-broadcast of Local EAS Messages
- C. Video text or crawl
- D. Local agreements
- E. Independent or Supplemental Coverage

**VI. TESTS**

- A. Required Weekly Test (RWT)
- B. Required Monthly Test (RMT)
- C. Tests of PIES, NOAA Weather Radio, and EAS Tone-alert Radios

- APPENDIX A:** SPECIFIC AREA MESSAGE ENCODING (SAME) PROTOCOL
- APPENDIX B:** DESCRIPTION OF EVENT CODES FOR NON-WEATHER EVENTS
- B-1 EAS Activation Message
  - B-2 EAS Administrative Message
- APPENDIX C:** HOUSTON REGIONAL AMBER PLAN
- APPENDIX D:** HOUSTON AREA LECC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

**NOTE:**

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**EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM  
LOCAL AREA PLAN  
FOR THE  
HOUSTON, TEXAS, OPERATIONAL AREA**

**I. OVERVIEW**

A. Authority for the Emergency Alert System (EAS)

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has authority to issue rules, regulations, reports and orders concerning the Emergency Alert System (EAS) under: Title 47 U.S.C. 151, 154 (i) and (o), 303 (r), 524 (g) and 606; and 47 C.F.R Part 11, FCC Rules and Regulations and Part 73, Subpart G, FCC Rules and Regulations.

The FCC modified EAS rules and regulations in a Report and Order (FCC-97-338) adopted on September 24, 1997; in a Report and Order (FCC-98-329) adopted on December 14, 1998; and a in a Report and Order (FCC-02-64) adopted February 22, 2002. These documents can be download from the FCC's Electronic Document Management System (EDOCS) at: [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/)

Effective December 31, 1998, EAS rules and regulations applied to all AM and FM radio stations, Class D FM radio stations, television stations, low power television (LPTV) stations, and wired cable systems with 10,000 or more subscribers.

Effective October 1, 2002, EAS rules and regulations also applied to both wired and wireless cable systems with 5,000 or more subscribers. Cable systems with less than 5,000 subscribers may transmit EAS messages on only one channel, provided the cable system transmits a video interruption and audio alert message on all channels stating which one channel will carry the complete EAS message.

The Report and Order (FCC-02-64) adopted on February 22, 2002, added new event codes, adopted a naming convention for new event codes (see Appendix A), increased the time period for rebroadcast of the Required Monthly Test to 60 minutes, and modified EAS rules for low-power FM stations, broadcast satellite and repeater stations, and both cable systems serving fewer than 5,000 subscribers.

Broadcast stations and cable systems are "strongly encouraged" to voluntarily upgrade their existing EAS encoder/decoder equipment (as soon as available from the manufacturer) and add the new event codes recommended by the LECC (see Section IV-E). All models of EAS equipment manufactured after August 1, 2003 must be capable of receiving and transmitting the old and new event codes. Broadcast stations and cable systems that replace their EAS equipment after February 1, 2004, must install equipment that is capable of receiving and transmitting both the old and new event codes.

## B. Definition of an Emergency

The FCC defines an emergency as a “situation posing an extraordinary threat to the safety of life and property. Examples are, but not limited to, severe weather and natural situations such as: tornadoes, floods and flash floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, tidal waves, severe thunderstorms, high winds, icing conditions, heavy snows, widespread fires, and man-made or technological situations such as: nuclear attack or war, industrial explosions, discharge of toxic or flammable gases, release of chemical, biological or radioactive agents, terrorist attacks, widespread power failures, civil disorders, and dam failures.”

In general, the following conditions should be considered in determining whether an emergency alert message is warranted:

1. Severity – will aid in reducing loss of life or reducing substantial loss of property
2. Timing – requires immediate public knowledge to avoid adverse impact
3. Other means of disseminating information are inadequate to ensure rapid delivery

Specific activation criteria under this Local Area Plan are listed in Section IV-B.

## C. Technical Capabilities

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) utilizes a digital Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) protocol adopted by the FCC and the National Weather Service. All EAS audio messages transmitted by broadcast stations and cable systems must be preceded by a Header Code of high-speed digital data identifying the:

1. Originator of the message (such as the Weather Service or Civil Authority)
2. Event code (such as tornado or flood warning, or child abduction emergency)
3. Location of the county affected by the emergency
4. The valid time period of the message (in 15 or 30 minute increments)
5. Date and time the message was issued

This digital information can be received, stored, and displayed on EAS decoders, computers, cellular phones, pagers, video crawl and closed captioning systems, and other digital receiving equipment. All broadcasters and cable operators are required to install equipment necessary to encode/decode EAS messages using the SAME protocol. The public is encouraged to purchase NOAA Weather Radios or EAS receivers using SAME tone-alert technology. Details about the SAME header codes are included in Appendix A.

## D. Summary of National EAS Plan

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or White House Communications Agency (WHCA) can disseminate national emergency messages upon request of the President through a dedicated network of Primary Entry Point (PEP) stations. The two PEP stations in Texas are KTRH-AM 740 in Houston and WBAP-AM 820 in Fort Worth.

All radio and television stations and cable systems nationwide are required to transmit national emergency messages “live”, or with the FCC’s prior permission, to go off the air in the event of a national emergency.

EAS information is available from the EAS Coordinator, Federal Communications Commission, Room 7-C753, 445 – 12<sup>th</sup> Street Southwest, Washington, DC 20554. National EAS information is available by telephone (888-CALL-FCC), fax (202-418-7290), on-line ([www.fcc.gov/eb/eas](http://www.fcc.gov/eb/eas)), or by e-mail ([eas@fcc.gov](mailto:eas@fcc.gov))

#### E. Summary of Texas EAS Plan

The current Texas Emergency Alert System Plan is incorporated by reference and adopted for the Houston Operational Area unless modified by this Local Area Plan. You can download the state plan, EAS Handbook, or view the state’s EAS Message Board from the Texas Association of Broadcasters website ([www.tab.org/eas.html](http://www.tab.org/eas.html))

The Texas Department of Public Safety’s Division of Emergency Management (DPS/DEM) will disseminate state emergency messages upon request of the Governor or other authorized state officials by phone or fax to State Relay points.

The five State Relay points in Texas are KTRH-AM 740 in Houston, WBAP-AM 820 in Fort Worth, WOAI-AM 1200 in San Antonio, the Texas State Network, and the Austin/San Antonio Office of the National Weather Service located in New Braunfels (which will relay state emergency messages to all National Weather Service offices serving any Texas counties).

All broadcast stations and cable systems in Texas are required to monitor their closest State Relay station and are requested to re-broadcast State EAS messages within five (5) minutes of receipt.

For more information, contact the Chair of the Texas State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC), c/o Texas Association of Broadcasters, 502 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78701. Texas EAS information is also available by telephone (512-322-9944), by fax (512-322-0522), on-line ([www.tab.org](http://www.tab.org)), or e-mail ([ann@tab.org](mailto:ann@tab.org))

#### F. Summary of Local and State AMBER Alert Plans

The Houston Regional AMBER Plan was developed in December 2000 to quickly disseminate local child abduction emergency messages (AMBER Alerts). Incorporated as a non-profit organization, the Houston Regional AMBER Plan is administered by a separate Board of Directors composed of LECC members, local law enforcement agencies, and missing child organizations.

Houston Regional AMBER Alerts, Updates, and Cancellations are distributed by KTRH-AM 740 using the Emergency Alert System and a secure website ([www.amber-plan.net](http://www.amber-plan.net)) which sends AMBER Alert copy and photos by e-mail and fax to local media, law enforcement agencies, missing child organizations, and AMBER Plan Partners (such as bus, taxi, and delivery

services). Local law enforcement agencies can request issuance of a Houston Regional AMBER Alert when the following five criteria are met:

1. The child is 17 years of age or younger (meaning the child is a minor under Texas state law.)
2. The law enforcement agency believes the child has been abducted (unwillingly taken from their environment without permission from the child's parent or legal guardian, or the child has been taken by the child's parent or legal guardian who also commits an act of murder or attempted murder during the time of the abduction.)
3. The law enforcement agency believes the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death.
4. A law enforcement investigation has taken place that verified the abduction or eliminated alternative explanations for the child's disappearance.
5. Sufficient information is available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the child, suspect, or the vehicle used in the abduction.

Using similar criteria, the Office of the Governor developed the Texas AMBER Alert Network in August 2002 to quickly disseminate AMBER Alerts within a 200-mile radius from the point of abduction or statewide if necessary.

Texas AMBER Alerts are disseminated by the National Weather Service using the Texas Emergency Alert System, by the Texas Department of Transportation's Traffic Operations Division using its Dynamic Message Signs and Low-Power AM Radio Stations along major highways, by Beyond Missing using its Internet-based website ([www.beyondmissing.com](http://www.beyondmissing.com)), and other methods approved by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Local Primary stations are authorized to disseminate AMBER Alerts, Updates, and Cancellations (with or without EAS activation) as requested by participating law enforcement agencies or the Texas Department of Public Safety. If EAS activation is requested, AMBER Alerts and Updates should be transmitted using the Child Abduction Emergency (CAE) event code.

Other broadcast stations and cable operators are encouraged to re-broadcast all AMBER Alerts, Updates, and Cancellations without EAS activation as either news bulletins or news stories, repeated as often as deemed appropriate by the broadcaster or cable operator. As an option to news bulletins or stories, television stations and cable systems can also transmit AMBER Alerts as video crawls or as full-screen text summaries on appropriate cable channels.

Participating stations and cable systems are encouraged to utilize the AMBER Alert logo in their news programming and public service announcements for the Houston Regional AMBER Plan, and to provide a link from their website to the AMBER Plan website ([www.Amber-plan.net](http://www.Amber-plan.net))

#### G. Purpose of Local Area Plan

The purpose of the Local Area Plan is to establish procedures for the local activation, monitoring, re-broadcast, and testing of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) by radio and television stations and cable system operators licensed or franchised to serve any portion of the Houston Operational Area. The Local Area Plan provides Local Authorized Officials a reliable, low-cost, and geographic-specific method to quickly warn the public of major emergencies.

#### H. Counties within the Houston Local Operational Area

The Houston Area is one of 25 Local Operational Areas in Texas. The Houston Local Operational Area includes the following 13 Texas counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Waller, and Wharton. A list of EAS location codes for each county is included in Appendix A.

## **II. LOCAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (LECC)**

### **A. Membership**

Membership in the Houston Area Local Emergency Communications Committee is voluntary and open to Houston area representatives of the Local Primary stations, other radio and television stations, wired and wireless cable system operators, city and county offices of emergency management, local cable television franchising authorities, Local Emergency Planning Committees, the Houston Galveston Office of the National Weather Service, any local, state or federal agency authorized to activate the Emergency Alert System, and any other membership category approved by the LECC.

Membership is also available to Houston area representatives of other services regulated by the FCC that may voluntarily participate in EAS, including but not limited to direct satellite broadcast systems, digital paging services, telephone and cellular carriers, Internet Service Providers, Open Video Systems, Local Multipoint Distribution Services, Satellite Master Antenna Television systems, and other digital technology systems.

Requests for membership should be submitted to the LECC Chair; if approved, an updated Membership Directory is forwarded to the Texas State Emergency Communications Committee and to the Federal Communications Commission.

### **B. Adoption or Amendment of Plan**

By majority vote of the LECC members in attendance, the Houston Area LECC shall elect its own officers and subcommittees as may be needed, approve motions and bylaws, adopt or amend the Local Area Plan, and conduct other EAS business within the Houston Operational Area.

Upon adoption of the Plan or any amendment by the LECC, the Local Area Plan must be submitted for approval by the Texas State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) and the Federal Communications Commission before incorporation into the Texas EAS Plan.

### **C. Voluntary Participation by Broadcast Stations and Cable Systems**

All broadcasters (including AM and FM radio stations, television stations, and low power television stations) and all wired cable systems with more than 10,000 subscribers operators are required under FCC rules and regulations to transmit all EAS tests and national emergency messages. Under the FCC's First Report and Order, broadcasters and cable operators may be asked by the FCC or LECC to indicate in advance whether they intend to voluntarily transmit or re-broadcast state and/or local emergency messages. Each station and cable system is responsible for deciding what types (event codes) of emergency messages will be aired, what counties (locations) those emergency messages will be aired, and whether they will program their EAS decoder to manually or automatically relay local, state, or national EAS messages.

Voluntary participation on the LECC or adoption of this Local Area Plan shall not be deemed as a relinquishment of program control. A broadcast licensee or cable operator shall not be



prohibited from exercising his or her independent discretion and responsibility in any given situation. The concept of management of each broadcast station and cable system to exercise discretion regarding the transmission of emergency information and instructions to the general public is provided by Part 11 of the FCC Rules.

#### D. EAS Promotional and Public Service Announcements

All city and county offices of emergency management, local emergency planning committees, industry, and government agencies including the National Weather Service, are encouraged to promote their plans to utilize the Emergency Alert System as a community warning method, and to list the call letters and frequencies of the Local Primary stations in their warning plans, community outreach brochures, websites, and other promotional materials.

Broadcasters and cable operators that voluntarily participate as members of the LECC and follow the recommended procedures of the Local Area Plan may identify themselves as a “Local Participant in the Emergency Alert System for the Houston, Texas, Operational Area” in EAS tests, public service announcements, websites, and other promotional materials.

Under Part 11.46 of the FCC rules and regulations, broadcasters and cable operators may use public service announcements or obtain commercial sponsors for announcements, infomercials, or programs explaining EAS to the public. Such announcements and programs may not be a part of alerts or tests, and may not simulate or attempt to copy alert tones or codes.

### III. LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES

#### A. Designation of Local Primary Sources

The Houston Area LECC designates the following Houston stations as Local Primary sources:

1. Local Primary - One (LP-1): KTRH-AM 740, Houston, Texas  
Monitoring Assignments: Primary Entry Point and State EOC Lines  
NOAA Weather Radio or Weather Wire  
Texas State Network (Channel 1 or 0-Left)  
24-hour Emergency Contacts: KTRH News Room (713-212-8740)  
KTRH Master Control (**confidential**)  
24-hour Fax Number: KTRH News Room (713-212-8957)  
KTRH EAS/Amber Alert Fax (**confidential**)
2. Local Primary - Two (LP-2): KUHF-FM 88.7, Houston, Texas  
Monitoring Assignments: NOAA Weather Radio or Weather Wire  
KTRH-AM 740  
24-hour Emergency Contacts: KUHF News Room (713-743-1823)  
KUHF Control Room (**confidential**)  
24-hour Fax Number: KUHF News Room (713-743-1818)
3. Local Primary - Spanish (LP-S): None

#### B. Responsibilities of Local Primary Sources

In their own emergency plans, city and county offices of emergency management, Local Emergency Planning Committees, industry, and other response organizations can designate the Local Primary sources as a primary source of official information during an emergency.

In consideration of this designation and each station's commitment to public safety, Local Primary sources agree to:

1. Provide staff trained to broadcast EAS messages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
2. Install an EAS decoder capable of receiving at least 2 of its Monitoring Assignments
3. Install an EAS encoder capable of alerting all 13 counties for all EAS event codes
4. Install a PIES transceiver with automatic recording capabilities
5. Install a direct telephone line answered 24-hours by a trained operator on duty
6. Establish a call back or codeword system to authenticate telephone requests for activation

The LP-1 and LP-2 stations agree to broadcast all local and state EAS messages with the proper SAME header code within five (5) minutes of receipt. If designated, an LP-S station will translate all local and state EAS message into Spanish and broadcast the message in Spanish with the proper SAME header code within five (5) minutes of being translated. During hours when an LP-S station does not have a Spanish translator available, the LP-S station will re-broadcast local and state EAS messages in English.

#### **IV. ACTIVATION PROCEDURES**

##### **A. Local Authorized Officials**

In accordance with the Texas Disaster Act, the Local Area Plan can be activated at the request of:

1. The Mayor or Emergency Management Coordinator of any incorporated city within the Houston Operational Area
2. The County Judge or Emergency Management Coordinator of any county or unincorporated area within the Houston Operational Area
3. The Houston/Galveston Office of the National Weather Service in Dickinson

Other city or county departments or state agencies should route their request for local EAS activation through the local Office of Emergency Management of the affected city or county.

Overnight, weekends and holidays when the city/county administrative and emergency management offices are closed, local EAS activation may be requested through the 24-hour police or fire dispatch center if so authorized by their city or county office of emergency management.

The Local Area Plan can also be activated at the request of the Special Agent In Charge of the Houston Division office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Commanding Officer of the United States Coast Guard's Sector or Marine Safety Office Houston-Galveston, or their designee in order to disseminate warnings about imminent threats or local attacks involving suspected terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, hazardous material releases, or other local emergencies where these federal agencies have jurisdiction.

##### **B. Local Activation Criteria**

Requests for local activation of the Emergency Alert System should be limited to an emergency event or situation which:

1. Poses an immediate or imminent threat to life or property,
2. Has the potential to adversely impact a significant population or geographic area,
3. Requires or recommends the public to seek shelter or take protective action.

For other non-emergency events not meeting the above criteria (such as school or business closings, ozone alerts, pollen reports, water rationing, ban on outdoor burning, etc.), other means of quickly disseminating information to the media and public are available including:

1. Broadcast fax software and services
2. Incoming telephone systems such as the CAER Line (281-476-2237)
3. Outbound telephone notification systems such as FirstCall Interactive Network or the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Network's Neighborhood Early Warning System
4. E-mail systems such as CorporateNEWS, NewsRouter, or the Harris County Office of Emergency Management's Media Alert Notification System (MANS)
5. Distribution by media services such as the AP, Reuters, or PR Newswire

C. Activation Requests by Telephone or Fax

A Local Authorized Official or his/her designee should contact KTRH-AM 740 by telephone at 713-212-8740 to request Local EAS activation. If KTRH-AM 740 is off-the-air or unable to activate EAS, then the Local Authorized Official or his/her designee should contact KUHF-FM 88.7 by telephone at 713-747-8651 or the Houston/Galveston Office of the National Weather Service by telephone at **(confidential)**. KTRH-AM 740, KUHF-FM 88.7 and the National Weather Service may establish their own codeword or call back system in order to verify the activation request is legitimate.

The Houston/Galveston Office of the National Weather Service also requests that a copy of the completed EAS script (see Appendix B) be faxed to their offices at (confidential – contact NWS for fax number) to ensure the request is accurately transcribed by the forecaster on duty.

D. Public Information Emergency System (PIES)

Because telephone lines may be busy or disrupted during an emergency, the Public Information Emergency System (PIES) provides a two-way radio system for Local Authorized Officials or their designees (such as their city and county offices of emergency management and 24-hour command or dispatch centers) to contact the Local Primary stations and the National Weather Service for the purposes of requesting EAS activation.

PIES uses a repeater radio system to transmit on 450.5875 MHz and receive on 455.5875 MHz. To monitor PIES broadcasts, listen to 450.5875 MHz.

In order to verify the PIES transmission is being broadcast from an authorized unit, all PIES transceivers must be equipped with a two-tone Digital Coded Squelch (DSC) encoder. Because this information is security-sensitive, the DSC number and encoder tones are not included in this Local Area Plan, but are available by contacting the LECC Chair or the Chief Engineer at KTRH-AM 740.

The following organizations have been assigned PIES Units:

Unit #1	City of Houston
Unit #2	City of Baytown
Unit #3	City of Texas City
Unit #4	Galveston County
Unit #5	Fort Bend County
Unit #6	City of Deer Park
Unit #7	City of La Marque
Unit #8	Harris County
Unit #9	City of Jacinto City
Unit #10	City of Galveston
Unit #11	City of Webster
Unit #12	City of Pasadena
Unit #13	City of Dickinson
Unit #14	City of Tomball
Unit #15	City of Stafford
Unit #16	City of League City
Unit #17	City of Sugar Land
Unit #18	City of Seabrook
Unit #19	Memorial Villages
Unit #20	City of La Porte
Unit #21	National Weather Service
Unit #22	City of Nassau Bay
Unit #23	City of Pearland
Unit #24	Cities of Taylor Lake and El Lago
Unit #25	City of Missouri City
Unit #26	KUHF-FM 88.7 (LP-2)
Unit #27	City of Friendswood
Unit #28	Austin County

As the Local Primary (LP-1) station, KTRH-AM 740 assigns PIES unit designations to authorized agencies, serves as Net Control station during regional emergencies, and tests PIES every Monday morning at 9:15 am local time. If the Monday falls on a federal holiday, the PIES test is conducted on Tuesday. The KTRH News Director serves as the PIES Radio Supervisor.

Local Authorized Officials whose offices or dispatch centers are located within 50-75 miles of downtown Houston are encouraged to install their own PIES transceivers and exterior antenna; contact the News Director or Chief Engineer of KTRH-AM 740 at 713-212-8000 in order to obtain a unit designation, list of equipment vendors, and PIES transceiver encoding information.

Organizations that do not have PIES capability are encouraged to contact the closest county office of emergency management to request EAS activation using the county's PIES unit.

Broadcasters and cable systems are encouraged to monitor PIES reports and weekly tests. PIES reports should not be re-broadcast "live" but can be recorded and re-broadcast as appropriate.

## E. Activation Event Codes

Local Primary Stations will activate EAS upon the request of the Houston/Galveston Office of the National Weather Service for the following severe weather events affecting any portion of the 13 counties in the Houston Operational Area:

- FFW - Flash Flood Warning (due to heavy rains, rapid rise in river stage, or dam break)
- FLW - Flood Warning (flooding due to gradual rise of lakes, rivers, and bayous)
- SVR - Severe Thunderstorm Warning (with lightning, hail, and damaging winds)
- TOR - Tornado Warning (tornado sighting or touchdown)
- TSW – Tsunami Warning (tsunami expected to impact Texas coast)

Other severe weather warnings, watches, and statements may be broadcast without EAS activation as part of normal programming at the station's discretion.

Local Primary Stations will also activate EAS upon the request of a Local Authorized Official (identified in Section IV-A) for any of the following specific Event Codes (used in place of the generic Civil Emergency Message):

- CDW - Civil Danger Warning (hurricane evacuation or public health emergency)
- FRW - Fire Warning (structural, forest or wildfire requiring evacuations)
- HMW - Hazardous Materials Warning (toxic or flammable chemical release)
- LEW - Law Enforcement Warning (terrorist attack, bomb, riot, or bridge collapse)
- NUW - Nuclear Power Plant Warning (emergency at a nuclear power plant)
- RHW - Radiological Hazard Warning (loss or release of radioactive materials)

A Warning is normally issued only once to provide initial notification (alert) of the event. A new Warning is issued only if the hazard zone or geographic area requiring public protective actions has expanded into another county or geographic zone, or if the expiration time has been extended. All other updates, corrections or early cancellations of the event should be sent as a non-emergency Administrative Message (ADR) without EAS activation or by other means (e.g., telephone, fax, e-mail, or media briefings) to local news media outlets.

F. Format of Local EAS Messages

Local Primary sources will broadcast Local EAS Messages according to this format:

1. Stop regular programming
2. Optional Intro:  
“We interrupt our programming to activate the Houston Texas Emergency Alert System. Important information will follow.”
3. One-second pause (no audio)
4. Send EAS Header Code three times (3 times is required to trip EAS decoders)  
Incorporate the County FIPS code(s) and Event Code according to Appendix A
5. One-second pause (no audio)
6. Eight-second Attention Signal (853 and 960 Hz tones)
7. Activation Announcement:  
“We interrupt our programming to activate the Houston Texas Emergency Alert System.”
8. Broadcast EAS or PIES Message (max 90-seconds due to time limits of most decoders)
9. Termination Announcement:  
“This concludes activation of the Houston Texas Emergency Alert System.”
10. One-second pause (no audio)
11. Send EAS End-of-message Code three times (3 times is needed to release EAS decoders)
12. Resume normal programming

## **V. MONITORING AND RE-BROADCAST**

### **A. Monitoring assignments**

All broadcast and cable systems serving any portion of the Houston Operational Area must monitor the LP-1 (KTRH-AM 740) and LP-2 (KUHF-FM 88.7) stations.

Broadcasters and cable systems unable to receive a Local Primary source should monitor the National Weather Service's NOAA Weather Radio serving their county, or the Texas State Network's satellite delivery system (Channel 1 or "Zero-left" channel) instead. NOAA Weather Radio transmits on frequencies of 162.40 MHz in Houston, 162.425 MHz in Bay City, or 162.55 MHz in Galveston or Bryan/College Station

### **B. Re-broadcast of EAS messages**

Local Primary sources transmitting EAS messages shall be deemed to have conferred authority for re-broadcast by other broadcast stations and cable operators serving the Houston Area.

All other broadcasters and cable systems are encouraged to re-broadcast the audio portion of the EAS message received from a Local Primary source, or use their own on-air staff to repeat or summarize the EAS message following the same "Format For Local EAS Messages" in Section IV-F. The on-air staff should be careful that they broadcast only the audio (verbal) portion of the EAS message. Use of the EAS header code, 8-second Attention Signal, and end of message code is optional for re-broadcast of Local EAS Messages.

Broadcasters and cable operators are encouraged to set their EAS encoder/decoders to either automatic or semi-automatic mode in order to re-broadcast Local EAS messages within five (5) minutes of receipt. EAS encoder/decoders should be programmed to re-broadcast Local EAS messages with any of the Event Codes listed in Section IV-E that affect the specific counties within the station's coverage area or cable system's franchise area.

Broadcasters and cable operators are encouraged to transmit other EAS warnings, watches, and statements without EAS activation as appropriate for their normal programming.

Local Authorized Officials may authorize their organizations to repeat or summarize any EAS warnings, watches, and statements on their own internal radio channels as they deem appropriate.



### C. Video text or crawl

Television stations and cable systems serving 5,000 or more subscribers are required to provide both audio and video versions of national EAS messages and all EAS tests on all programmed channels to ensure EAS messages are accessible to all viewers, especially those with hearing disabilities. Cable systems with less than 5,000 subscribers may transmit EAS messages on only one channel, provided the cable system transmits a video interruption and audio alert message on all channels stating which one channel will carry the complete EAS message.

For State and Local EAS messages, television stations and cable systems are encouraged to provide a full-screen text summary or video crawl summarizing the EAS message, including the originator, event, location, and valid time period of the message. Any video crawl must be displayed at the top of the screen or another location in order to prevent interference with any closed captioning system or character-generated supers. Spanish-language television stations can display its text summary or video crawl in either Spanish or English.

In addition, television stations and cable systems are encouraged to provide a small color-coded map of their viewing area showing the warnings in effect. This map should be displayed continuously as long as the warnings are in effect.

Cable operators are required to transmit on all channels the audio and video of EAS messages that contain the event codes EAN, EAT, and RMT. Each cable operator must originate an Required Weekly Test (RWT) message at random days and times each week. The Required Weekly Test message can be an “audio only” interruption on all channels.

Local cable franchise agreements must comply with State and Local Emergency Alert System procedures adopted under the Texas EAS Plan and Houston Local Area Plan.

### D. Local Agreements

Effective May 23, 2002, Matagorda County has signed a Local Agreement with KMKS-102.5 FM and KZRC 92.5 FM to broadcast EAS Messages that will activate Alert Radios issued to residents of Matagorda County who live within ten (10) miles of the South Texas Project Electric Generating Station (STPEGS). EAS Messages and News Advisories will be faxed to KTRH-AM, KUHF-FM, and other major media outlets in Houston to describe what impact, if any, may occur outside of Matagorda County.

Nothing in this Local Area Plan shall prevent cities, counties, or other jurisdictions in the Houston Operational Area from passing an ordinance, modifying a franchise agreement, or entering into a separate written agreement with one or more local broadcasters or cable systems to transmit other local emergency announcements (such as requiring a cable operator to carry state and local EAS messages on all channels) or to provide special warning systems (such as a cable TV override system activated by a local office of emergency management) that use the EAS-compatible SAME protocol.

However, copies of such proposed agreements should be provided to the Houston Area LECC and Texas SECC for review to ensure that the provisions do not conflict with EAS requirements.

E. Independent or Supplemental Coverage

Nothing in this Local Area Plan shall prevent broadcasters and cable systems from providing their own independent or supplemental coverage of any emergency such as news or weather bulletins, video text summaries or video crawls containing information obtained by the broadcaster or cable system. Such independent or supplemental coverage does not require EAS activation.

Broadcasters and cable systems may voluntarily choose to provide school or business closings, ozone alerts, or other non-emergency events that fail to meet EAS criteria in Section IV-B.

**VI. TESTS**

A. Required Weekly Test (RWT)

Each broadcaster and cable systems (including the Local Primary sources) shall originate their own Required Weekly Test at random days and times each week. If the test is scheduled during a time period when a severe weather watch, warning, or EAS message is in effect, the test should be postponed to another time.

Use of the 8-second Attention Signal is not required. Use of any audio test message is optional, but must air before or after all digital codes. The format of the Required Weekly Test is:

1. Stop regular programming.
2. One-second pause (no audio)
3. Send EAS Header Code (with RWT event code) three times
4. One-second pause
5. Send EAS End-of-Message Code three times
6. One-second pause
7. Read the optional Audio Test Message:

“This is a test of the Houston Texas Emergency Alert System. In the event of an emergency, this system would bring you important information. This test is now concluded.”

8. Resume normal programming

All broadcast stations and cable systems receiving a Required Weekly Test from either of their monitored sources must log receipt of both weekly tests. No further action is required. TV stations and cable systems are not required to transmit a video message when transmitting the required weekly test. The Required Weekly Test does not have to be conducted during the same week that a Required Monthly Test is conducted.

B. Required Monthly Test (RMT)

All broadcast stations and cable systems (including those that have elected not to participate in State or Local EAS messages) must log and re-broadcast the Required Monthly Test each month. Statewide tests of the Texas Emergency Alert System are conducted on the first Tuesday of each month. If that day falls on a holiday, the test will be conducted on the following day. During even-numbered months, the test will be conducted between 4:45 a.m. and 6:45 a.m.; during odd-numbered months, the test will be conducted between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The specific time of the Required Monthly Test will vary each month and be chosen by the Chief Engineers of the PEP stations. Visit the TAB website ([www.tab.org/eas.html](http://www.tab.org/eas.html)) to obtain the current schedule of Required Monthly Tests in Texas.

The Texas State Emergency Communications Committee will coordinate planning between the National Weather Service and the Texas Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management to initiate the Required Monthly Test by contacting the two Primary Entry Point (PEP) stations in Texas, KTRH-AM 740 in Houston and WBAP-AM 820 in Fort Worth.

The format of the Required Monthly Test is:

1. Stop regular programming
2. Optional intro:  
"This is a test of the Texas Emergency Alert System."
3. One-second pause
4. Send EAS Header Code (with RMT event code) three times
5. One-second pause
6. Send eight-second EAS Attention Signal (853 and 960 Hz)
7. Read (or re-broadcast) the required Audio Test Message:  
  
"This is a Required Monthly Test of the Texas Emergency Alert System. In the event of an emergency, this system would bring you important information. This test is now concluded."
8. One-second pause
9. Send EAS End-of-Message Code three times

10. One-second pause
11. Resume normal programming

Upon receipt of the Required Monthly Test, all other broadcasters and cable operators must log receipt of the test and re-transmit the Required Monthly Test within sixty (60) minutes, including the EAS Header Codes, Attention Signal, and the Audio Test Message as broadcast by one of the Local Primary sources they monitor.

Broadcasters and cable systems are assigned to monitor at least two Local Primary stations, so they will receive two Required Monthly Test messages each month. Broadcasters and cable systems are required to re-broadcast either one (but not both) of the RMT messages they receive each month. However, both RMT messages should be logged as received.

Television stations and cable operators must provide both audio and video versions of the Required Monthly Test on all programmed channels to ensure EAS messages are accessible to all viewers, especially those with hearing disabilities.

Television stations and cable systems are required to provide either a full-screen text summary or video crawl of the RMT message. The video message shall identify the Originator (EAS), Event (RMT), Location (all Houston Area county codes listed in Appendix A), and the valid time period of the message (+0015) as provided in the EAS Header of the message; the video message should also contain a text summary of the Audio Test Message.

Any video crawl must be displayed at the top of the screen or another location in order to prevent interference with any closed captioning system or character-generated supers. Spanish-language television stations can display its text summary or video crawl in either Spanish or English.

Radio stations licensed for daytime-only operations that receive a Required Monthly Test at night must re-transmit the Required Monthly Test within sixty (60) minutes of the station's sign-on.

Broadcast and cable management should impress on their staff that re-broadcast of the Required Monthly Test is not an option and cannot be replaced by the station or cable system conducting its own monthly test. It is an FCC violation to fail to re-broadcast the Required Monthly Test within sixty (60) minutes.

### C. Tests of PIES, NOAA Weather Radio, and EAS Tone-Alert Radios

Every organization assigned a PIES unit designation must participate in the weekly test of the Public Information Emergency System conducted by KTRH-AM 740 at approximately 9:15 a.m. every Monday morning. If the Monday falls on a federal holiday, the PIES test is postponed until the same time on Tuesday.

Organizations with PIES units that fail to participate in at least 75% of the PIES weekly tests during any three-month period may have their PIES License revoked by KTRH-AM 740 or the LECC Chair. An organization whose PIES License has been revoked can appeal to the LECC for reinstatement of its PIES License.

This weekly PIES test can be monitored by other organizations, broadcasters and cable systems equipped with a PIES receiver or scanner programmed to the PIES frequency of 450.5875 MHz. No further action by other broadcasters or cable systems is required.

The Houston/Galveston Office of the National Weather Service conducts a test of the NOAA Weather Radio between 11 a.m. and 12 noon every Wednesday. This test can be monitored by broadcasters and cable systems equipped with a NOAA Weather Radio or EAS decoder programmed to monitor the NOAA Weather Radio frequencies of 162.40 MHz in Houston, 162.425 MHz in Bay City, or 162.55 MHz in Galveston or Bryan/College Station. No further action by other broadcasters or cable systems is required.

Members of the public who have purchased EAS tone-alert radios can test their units by monitoring the Required Weekly and Monthly Tests conducted by the Local Primary sources. Contact the Traffic Department of each Local Primary station to find out what date and time the next EAS weekly or monthly test is scheduled.

APPENDIX A: SPECIFIC AREA MESSAGE ENCODING (SAME) PROTOCOL

The EAS Header Code consists of the following ASCII data codes:

ORG-EEE-PSSCCC+TTTT-JJHHMM-LLLLLLL

ORIGINATOR CODES (ORG):

EAN = Emergency Action Notification Network (National Alert)  
EAS = Local broadcast station or cable system  
CIV = Civil authorities (city, county, or state office of emergency management)  
PEP = Primary Entry Point System  
WXR = National Weather Service

REQUIRED NATIONAL EAS EVENT CODES (EEE):

EAN = Emergency Action Notification (National Alert)  
EAT = Emergency Action Termination (National Alert)  
RMT = Required Monthly Test (State or Local)  
RWT = Required Weekly Test (Local)

RECOMMENDED LOCAL EVENT CODES (EEE):

CAE = Child Abduction Emergency (State or Local AMBER Alerts)  
CDW = Civil Danger Warning (State or Local)  
FFW = Flash Flood Warning (NWS)  
FLW = Flood Warning (NWS)  
FRW = Fire Warning (State or Local)  
HMW = Hazardous Materials Warning (State or Local)  
LEW = Law Enforcement Warning (State or Local)  
NUW = Nuclear Power Plant Warning (State or Local)  
RHW = Radiological Hazard Warning (State or Local)  
SVR = Severe Thunderstorm Warning (NWS)  
TOR = Tornado Warning (NWS)  
TSW = Tsunami Warning (NWS)

OPTIONAL LOCAL EAS EVENT CODES (EEE):

ADR = Administrative Message (State or Local)  
AVA = Avalanche Watch (NWS)  
AVW = Avalanche Warning (NWS)  
BZW = Blizzard Warning (NWS)  
CFA = Coastal Flood Watch (NWS)  
CFW = Coastal Flood Warning (NWS)  
DMO = Practice/Demo Warning (State or Local)  
DSW = Dust Storm Warning (NWS)  
EQW = Earthquake Warning (State or Local)

EVI	=	Evacuation Immediate (State or Local)
FFA	=	Flash Flood Watch (NWS)
FFS	=	Flash Flood Statement (NWS)
FLA	=	Flood Watch (NWS)
FLS	=	Flood Statement (NWS)
HLS	=	Hurricane Local Statement (NWS)
HUA	=	Hurricane Watch (NWS)
HUW	=	Hurricane Warning (NWS)
HWA	=	High Wind Watch (NWS)
HWW	=	High Wind Warning (NWS)
LAE	=	Local Area Emergency (State or Local)
NMN	=	Network Message Notification (State or Local)
SMW	=	Special Marine Warning (NWS)
SPS	=	Special Weather Statement (NWS)
SPW	=	Shelter In Place Warning (State or Local)
SVA	=	Severe Thunderstorm Watch (NWS)
SVS	=	Severe Weather Statement (NWS)
TOA	=	Tornado Watch (NWS)
TOE	=	911 Telephone Outage Emergency (State or Local)
TRA	=	Tropical Storm Watch (NWS)
TRW	=	Tropical Storm Warning (NWS)
TSA	=	Tsunami Watch (NWS)
VOW	=	Volcano Warning (State or Local)
WSA	=	Winter Storm Watch (NWS)
WSW	=	Winter Storm Warning (NWS)

LOCATION CODES (PSSCCC):

This location code uses the 6-digit Federal Information Processing System (FIPS) code to indicate the specific geographic area (SS=state and CCC=county) affected by the Local EAS Message. The P code is presently "0" but is reserved for later use to identify portions of a specific county.

Austin	048015	Liberty	048291
Brazoria	048039	Matagorda	048321
Chambers	048071	Montgomery	048339
Colorado	048089	San Jacinto	048407
Fort Bend	048157	Waller	048473
Galveston	048167	Wharton	048481
Harris	048201		

#### TIME CODES (+TTTT)

This code indicates the valid time period of a message in 15-minute increments up to one hour, and then in 30-minute increments after one hour (i.e., +0015, +0030, +0045, +0100, +0130, +2000). For events (such as hazardous materials incidents) where the duration of the emergency cannot be estimated, the initial time code should be two hours (+0200); the EAS message can be cancelled earlier or extended later if needed.

#### DATE CODE (JJHHMM)

This is the day in Julian Calendar Days (JJJ) of the year and the time in hours and minutes (HHMM) when the message was initially released by the Originator using 24-hour Universal Coordinated Time (UTC). These codes are automatically inserted by the EAS encoder.

#### IDENTIFICATION CODE (LLLLLLLL)

This is the call sign or other identification (up to 8 characters) of the broadcast station, cable system, or National Weather Service office transmitting or re-broadcasting the message. These codes are automatically inserted by the EAS encoder.



## APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTION OF EVENT CODES FOR NON-WEATHER EMERGENCIES

### **ADR = ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE**

A non-emergency message provides updated or corrected 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. This message is transmitted without activation of the Emergency Alert System.

### **CAE = CHILD ABDUCTION EMERGENCY**

An emergency message about a missing child that a local or state law enforcement agency believes has been abducted. The message will describe the missing child, any suspect or vehicle, and ask the public to notify local law enforcement if they have any information regarding the child or suspect. This message may be transmitted with or without activation of the Emergency Alert System.

### **CDW = CIVIL DANGER WARNING**

A warning of an event that presents a danger to a significant civilian population (such as a hurricane, public health emergency, etc.) where evacuation, shelter in place, or other actions (such as boiling contaminated water or seeking medical treatment) are recommended.

### **FRW = FIRE WARNING**

A warning of a spreading forest fire, structural fire, or wildfire that threatens a populated area in the fire's path. Evacuation may be recommended by the local fire department, local or state fire marshal, state or federal forest agency, state or national park, or other land management agency.

### **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). Industry plant management or local officials may recommend evacuation for a flammable or explosive gas, shelter in place for a toxic chemical, or medical treatment for exposed persons in nearby areas.

### **LEW = LAW ENFORCEMENT WARNING**

A warning of a terrorist attack, bomb explosion, road or bridge collapse, riot, product tampering, or other criminal event that presents a danger to the public. A local, state, or federal law enforcement agency may close roads, waterways, or facilities; evacuate or deny access to affected areas; issue threat intelligence or response guidance; and arrest violators or suspicious persons.

### **NUW = NUCLEAR POWER PLANT WARNING**

A warning of an event at a nuclear power plant classified as a Site Area Emergency or a General Emergency by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). A Site Area Emergency is confined to the plant site; no off-site impact is expected. A General Emergency is confined to an area less than a 10-mile radius around the plant. Plant management or local 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 stolen radioactive materials; a transportation (aircraft, barge, rail car, ship, truck, etc.) accident which may involve nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, or radioactive wastes. The shipper or local officials may recommend evacuation or medical treatment of exposed persons in nearby areas.

APPENDIX B-1: EAS ACTIVATION MESSAGE

PROCEDURES:

1. Complete the script. All blanks must be filled out. Limit message to 90-seconds max.
2. Call KTRH at 713-212-8740, KUHF at 713-747-8651, or the National Weather Service at **(confidential)**.
3. If phone unavailable, use PIES radio to request KTRH activate EAS.
4. Fax a copy of the completed script to the National Weather Service at **(confidential)**.
5. If the emergency expands to other areas or ends early, call KTRH, KUHF, or NWS. Otherwise, the message will automatically expire after the time period you provide.

ORIGINATING AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ OR: \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_ (Name of Originating Agency) \_\_\_\_ requests activation of the Houston Area  
 Emergency Alert System to broadcast a \_\_\_\_ (Event Code) \_\_\_\_ in effect for a portion of  
 \_\_\_\_ (county) \_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_ (time) \_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. due to a \_\_\_\_ (type of incident) \_\_\_\_  
 located at \_\_\_\_ (name and/or street location) \_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_ (city or county) \_\_\_\_.

As a safety precaution, we recommend all persons in \_\_\_\_ (city or county) \_\_\_\_

(OR: within \_\_\_\_ mile(s) of this location between \_\_\_\_ (street) \_\_\_\_ on the north,  
 \_\_\_\_ (street) \_\_\_\_ on the south, \_\_\_\_ (street) \_\_\_\_ on the east, and \_\_\_\_ (street) \_\_\_\_ on the west):

- SHELTER IN PLACE until the incident is over. This means you should go inside the nearest building or vehicle, close all doors and windows, and turn off any air conditioning or heating systems that might draw in outside air. Stay off the telephone to keep phone lines open for emergency use.
- EVACUATE and stay clear of the area by heading cross-wind toward the \_\_\_\_ (safe directions or shelter location) \_\_\_\_.
- (Other protective actions or special instructions)

For more information, call \_\_\_\_ (Agency's public telephone) \_\_\_\_ or visit our website at:  
 \_\_\_\_ (Website Address where more information is available) \_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B-2 EAS ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

PROCEDURES:

1. Use this message to update or correct a previous warning, cancel a warning before its scheduled expiration time, or provide pre-event or post-event information.
2. Complete the script. All blanks must be filled out. Limit message to 90-seconds max.
3. Call KTRH at 713-212-8740, KUHF at 713-747-8651, or the National Weather Service at **(confidential)**.
4. If phone unavailable, use PIES radio to request KTRH activate EAS.
5. Fax a copy of the completed script to the National Weather Service at **(confidential)**.

ORIGINATING AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ OR: \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_ (Name of Originating Agency) \_\_\_\_ reports that the \_\_\_\_ (Event Code) \_\_\_\_ in effect for a portion of \_\_\_\_ (county) \_\_\_\_ has been:

- UPDATED as of \_\_\_\_ (time) \_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to add the following information:
  
- CANCELLED as of \_\_\_\_ (time) \_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. because the \_\_\_\_ (type of incident) \_\_\_\_ located at \_\_\_\_ (name and/or street location) \_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_ (city or county) \_\_\_\_ is now under control and no longer poses any threat to the area.
  
- The earlier recommendation to SHELTER IN PLACE has been cancelled. Instead, persons who sheltered-in-place should now open all doors and windows, and turn on their air conditioning or heating systems in order to air out the building before returning inside and resuming normal activities.
  
- The earlier recommendation to EVACUATE the area has been cancelled. Instead, persons who evacuated the area can now safely return to the area and resume normal activities. Evacuees should be prepared to show proper identification to local law enforcement to gain admission to the area.

(If needed, add any other pre-event or post-event information or special instructions here.)

For more information, call \_\_\_\_ (Agency's public telephone) \_\_\_\_ or visit our website at: \_\_\_\_ (Website Address where more information is available) \_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C: HOUSTON REGIONAL AMBER PLAN

The current “Houston Regional AMBER Plan” is incorporated by reference.

To obtain a current copy of the “Houston Regional AMBER Plan”, please contact AMBER Plan Executive Director Beth Alberts by phone at 713-314-3644 or e-mail: balberts@mrchouston.com

APPENDIX D: HOUSTON AREA LECC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The current “Houston Area LECC Membership Directory” (LECC.XLS) is incorporated by reference

To obtain a current copy of the “Houston Area LECC Membership Directory”, please contact LECC Chair Chuck Wolf by phone at 281-980-1400 or e-mail: mediacon@aol.com