



Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Presidential Alert Scheduled to Test Nation's Emergency Warning System**

### ***First-ever joint test of the Wireless Emergency Alert System, Emergency Alert System to take place on October 3<sup>rd</sup>***

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), along with its state partners at the Illinois State Police (ISP) and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) are notifying residents of an upcoming test of the emergency broadcast alert system. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) plan to conduct a first-of-its-kind test of the nation's emergency communications infrastructure via a test called a "Presidential Alert."

On **Wednesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**, a nationwide test of the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system will commence at **1:18 p.m. CST.**, followed by a national test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) at **1:20 p.m.**

The WEA test message will read: *THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.*

The EAS message will include a reference to the WEA test: *THIS IS A TEST of the National Emergency Alert System. This system was developed by broadcast and cable operators in voluntary cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, and local authorities to keep you informed in the event of an emergency. If this had been an actual emergency alert, an official message would have followed the alert tone you heard at the start of this message. A similar wireless emergency alert text message has been sent to all cell phones nationwide. Some cell phones will receive the message; others will not. No action is required.*

This is the first time the Wireless Emergency Alert system has been tested on a national level. WEA is used to warn the public about dangerous weather, missing children, and other regionally

critical situations through alerts on cellular phones. WEA allows most customers to receive geo-targeted alerts of imminent threats to safety in their area. The October 3<sup>rd</sup> WEA test will be sent through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). Cell towers will broadcast the WEA test for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, cell phones that are switched on and within range of an active cell tower should be capable of receiving the message. Cell phones should only receive the message once. Some older phones may not receive the test message.

“The test is intended to ensure public safety officials have the methods and systems to deliver urgent warnings and alerts to the public in times of an emergency or disaster,” said Acting IEMA Director William Robertson. “Periodic testing is a way to assess the operational readiness of the infrastructure and determine whether technological improvements are needed.”

While each message will clearly state THIS IS A TEST, and will make note that no action is needed, Illinois State Police will work with local law enforcement and 9-1-1 call centers prepare for the possibility of an increased call load. Additionally, the Illinois State Board of Education is working with schools to ensure parents and school children are aware that the test will occur during school hours.

"The continuity of communications during an emergency is a vital component of public safety," said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. "Testing our resources regularly ensures the abilities of first responders to save lives. The upcoming national test will help identify and repair deficiencies in keeping the public informed."

In 2006, President George W. Bush signed an executive order to create an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible and comprehensive system to alert the American people in situations of war, terrorism, natural disaster or other hazards of public safety and well-being. This task fell to the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security, and resulted in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's creation of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The law requires a nationwide EAS test at least once every three years. The last test of the EAS system was in 2017.

For more information about the upcoming Presidential Alert, including a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) in English and Spanish, visit [www.ready.illinois.gov](http://www.ready.illinois.gov).