



## Commercial Mobile Alert System

### BACKGROUND

- The Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS), also known as the Personal Localized Alert Network (PLAN) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), is a partnership between the FCC, FEMA and wireless carriers, whose purpose is to enhance public safety.
- CMAS allows government authorities to use FEMA's IPAWS-OPEN platform to send geographically targeted, text-like alerts to the public via their wireless handsets.
- CMAS will relay Presidential, AMBER, and Imminent Threat alerts to mobile phones in a geographically targeted affected area.
- CMAS alerts are limited to 90 characters.
- CMAS is only available through IPAWS.
- The new technology ensures emergency alerts will not get backlogged during times of emergency when networks are highly congested.

### WHO CAN SEND CMAS ALERTS?

- Authorized Federal, State, local, tribal or territorial officials can send CMAS alerts to the public.

### HOW DO AUTHORITIES REGISTER TO SEND CMAS ALERTS?

- Government agencies wishing to utilize CMAS must execute a Memorandum of Agreement with FEMA's Integrated Public Warning and Alert System (IPAWS) program. Information about the application process can be found on the IPAWS website.
- Alerting Authorities will not be charged by wireless carriers for sending CMAS messages.

### WHEN WILL CMAS BE AVAILABLE?

- Participating wireless carriers must begin deployment by April 2012. However, some carriers – AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon – will offer CMAS in certain areas ahead of schedule.

### WHERE WILL CMAS BE AVAILABLE?

- All the major cell carriers are participating in CMAS on a voluntary basis.
- For more information about the availability of this service, please contact your wireless mobile provider directly.

### HOW DO CMAS ALERTS DISPLAY ON MOBILE PHONES?

- CMAS uses a unique signal and vibration to attract attention, which is particularly helpful to people with hearing or vision-related disabilities.
- Alerts will automatically “pop up” on the mobile device screen.
- CMAS messages will not preempt calls in progress.
- Individuals may contact their wireless mobile provider to opt-out of Imminent Threat or AMBER alerts, however may not opt-out of Presidential alerts.

### WHAT DO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED TO DO?

- The public does not need to sign up to receive CMAS alerts.
- Wireless carriers will sell CMAS capable phones with the service already included.
- To find out if your existing phone has this service, please contact your wireless mobile service provider.
- Wireless customers will not be charged for the delivery of CMAS messages.