

IPAWSTIP

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System



TIP #18: Writing an Effective Alert, Continued!

To help ensure that warning messages are effective, they must be issued in a timely manner by a clearly identified source. The public is more responsive to clear messages that are free of jargon and use plain language. The threat must be clearly stated, and include the location, time, and expiration of the event. All messages should include a call to action. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- **Source:** State who the message is from. Research shows that the source is most effective when it comes at the beginning of short format messages, i.e., WEA. For longer EAS messages, the source is less important, and can go at the end of the message.
- **Hazard:** Describe the impending hazard event and how it poses a threat to people.
- **Location Personalization:** Specify the physical geographic bounds of the area at risk in terms the public can understand, e.g. street names most people know, landmarks. Say that people in this area should take protective action, and that people not in this area need not take action.
- **Consequences:** Describe the physical impacts of the hazard, and its effects on people in the area at risk.

Protective Action (PA) Guidance: Tell people exactly what to do to maximize their safety and provide specific instructions about how to do it.

- **PA Initiation and Completion Times:** State when the public should begin and complete the PA.

- How the PA Reduces Consequences: Tell the people how the PA they are being asked to take will reduce the consequences they will experience.
- Expiration Time: State when the warning expires, and/or new information will be released.

Please contact the IPAWS PMO at IPAWS@fema.dhs.gov with any questions.

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