IPAWS Customer Support

September 15, 2021

C’mon, sign up. We made it easy for you.

For the rest of you: Three Years go by quicker than you think.
Four Basic Steps

With a different spin for existing IPAWS Alerting Authorities.
Four Steps to become an Alerting Authority

Why the Four steps to becoming an IPAWS Alerting Authority remain important for existing IPAWS COGs.

First a note for those new folks about to begin the sign-up process:
We recommend that local jurisdictions first check with your state regarding state alerting policies. This does not apply to Tribal Nations.
Four Steps for ALL Alerting Authorities – Step 1

- We refreshed the EMI IS-247b course for Alert Originators in 2019 and added IPAWS IS-251a course for Alerting Administrators.
- Each course should take approximately two hours to complete. IS-247b completion is a prerequisite for full access to IPAWS-OPEN for the purpose of public alerting.
Four Steps for ALL Alerting Authorities – Step 2

There is an ever-increasing number of alert origination software tools available. We are seeing some consolidation where vendors merge and/or acquire other existing tools. Please keep our office apprised of any alert origination software vendor changes.
Four Steps for ALL Alerting Authorities – Step 3

IPAWS MOAs have a life span of THREE YEARS.

After that it is time to renew.

To date our office has not enforced MOA renewals in the interest of maintaining COG operational status.

We are currently conducting a campaign to renew expired MOAs.

We need your help to maintain up to date contact information in our files.
Four Steps for ALL Alerting Authorities – Step 3

Why THREE YEARS?

Really, we didn’t just make it up. It is based on NIST 4300A requirements.
In the last few years, several additional alert Event Codes have become available. If your COG has not refreshed your Public Alerting Authority permissions in a while, that is something you should consider. Changes include Blue Alerts, increased use of DMO, use of RWT for Live testing, TOE available for WEA dissemination, and NWS is now accepting IPAWS alerts.
Four Steps for ALL Alerting Authorities – Step 4 (more!)

Yes, there have been changes and improvements!
Proficiency Demonstrations

Why don’t we call them tests?
The official name: “IPAWS Mandatory Monthly Proficiency Demonstration Program” is a lot of words to type or say.

- Mandatory – you must send a successful EAS and/or WEA message to the IPAWS Lab Test/Demo environment.
- Monthly - You must complete a new Proficiency Demo each month
- Proficiency – Speaks to the ability to do a task well
- Demonstration - Show that you can do it.

Testing? No. We know that stuff works already. If your alerting tool is properly configured and operated, you are good. Practice, train, exercise, succeed!
A sheriff once asked: “Since you guys approve the alerting software why do I need to show that it works?”

My response: “Does Glock pass your annual handgun qualification for you?”

Accidental misuse in either case may result in injury or death.
The Proficiency Demo program was introduced in the fall of 2019. We began tracking results in January 2020. Then came COVID.

In response to the declared National Emergency, we have temporarily waived suspending access to the IPAWS Live production environment for missing three consecutive months of Proficiency Demos.

BUT – If your IPAWS Live Digital Certificate expires while you are out of Proficiency Demo compliance you must first get back into compliance by completing a successful Demo before receiving your new Live Cert. We consider this passive enforcement.

At this moment there are 13 IPAWS Alerting Authorities that do not have access to IPAWS Live because their Live Cert expired, and they have not completed a successful Proficiency Demo for three consecutive months or more.
A sample of the “Eye Chart” where we track Proficiency Demo performance:

(That’s 9 out of 20 out of compliance)
Proficiency Demos

The IPAWS Proficiency Demo program has been endorsed by the National Emergency Management Association, including the provision for loss of access to the IPAWS Live production following 3 consecutive misses.

At any given time 25-30% of IPAWS COGs fall into the 3 or more consecutive miss category.

Today 60% of the COGs in Proficiency Demo “Fail” category do NOT have current MOAs.

That means we most likely do not have current contact information for the local alerting authority.

That brings us back here:
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Proficiency Demos

Train – Practice – Exercise – Succeed!
Time for a few Questions and Answers
(If you make up the questions – I’ll make up the answers.)

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