

## TOO SOON TO BUY!

FEMA has made the long-anticipated announcement that it has adopted Common Alerting Protocol or CAP as the new standard for public warning. CAP allows emergency managers to issue emergency information through a variety of platforms, saving time and ensuring that the public gets the same message whether it's from broadcasters, cell phone texts, emails or highway signs. The CAP format also allows emergency managers to embed audio files, scripts, pictures, maps and graphics within their messages creating a data-rich product that is suited to both television and radio as well as the Internet. The FEMA news release can be found here:

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=52880>

While the FCC's 180-day clock is ticking, the NAB and organizations like the Society of Broadcast Engineers have filed requests asking the FCC to delay the deadline for an additional 180 days or more, giving manufacturers a chance to make sure their next generation EAS equipment meets CAP standards. CAP EAS equipment has been on the market for more than a year and has been installed in some radio and TV stations as well as emergency management offices around the country. FEMA has been conducting compliance tests at their conformance lab set up especially for this project. They are expected to release their list of compliant equipment sometime this (November) month. The FCC has not yet responded to the NAB request for a delay although they are expected to agree to the request.

Even so, you may want to wait before you pick up the phone and order your new EAS equipment. A lot could change in the near future. In addition to the possible extension of the 180-day deadline, the FCC is expected to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to rewrite EAS regulations. There could be pressure from FEMA on state officials to purchase CAP equipment and that will affect what you end up buying. Questions have been raised about possible incompatibility issues between manufacturers, issues that could result in delays in broadcasting emergency messages. And there are still unanswered questions about the new equipment, including the low-cost converter boxes that can be buttoned on to legacy EAS equipment to accept CAP messages and translate them into information the legacy box can use for an activation. All indications are that the converter boxes will not be compliant with the expected changes in the Part 11 rules.

And even where state and local officials decline to buy new EAS equipment, there may still be an opportunity for broadcasters to agree on a single product and then seek a group discount from the manufacturer. NBA members who are interested in such a

discount should contact SECC Chair Adrienne Abbott for more information. We will be surveying stations to determine your EAS needs and interests.

FAQ's about EAS and CAP can be found here:

<http://www.sbe.org/>

<http://www.digitalalerts.com/>

<http://www.thebdr.net/articles/fcc/eas/index.html>

Adrienne Abbott

nevadaeas@charter.net

775750-5987