Minnesota Integrated Public Alert and Warning Systems (IPAWS)

2022 – 2023 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Approved: November 18, 2021

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Executive Summary

In 2012, the State Emergency Communications Board (SECB) appointed a committee for the purpose of assembling teams of skilled staff and volunteers to update Minnesota's warning and alerting capabilities in compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program for alerting called the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The MN-IPAWS committee and work groups are not required duties either by the state or with local agencies so priorities are were inconsistent, but a dedicated handful of staff supported in-kind by broadcast, outreach, multi-lingual/cultural and other skills representing government, private and non-profit agencies interested in developing a robust multilingual warning and alert system have accomplished the bulk of the original work plan in the spirit of public service.

Accomplishments

Since the Third MN-IPAWS Committee work plan was of January of 2018, since then the following milestones have been accomplished:

- 2018 was a busy year, we presented 14 Public Alerting Authority Best Practice Workshops training an additional 196 in how to properly send an IPAWS message to the public.

- In October through December of 2018 we hosted 11 Emergency Alert System (EAS) workshops throughout the state with 129 Broadcasters, Cable and Telephone company personnel attending to get updated information and to hear about future changes coming.

- Since January of 2018 an additional 12 counties have signed up for IPAWS making a 15 percent increase in counties having this additional public information and warning capability.

- Started in 2019 planning for and in 2021 reformatted the Emergency Alert System (EAS) plan to match up with the FCC's new ARS format and shorten it up by 13 pages by changing format.

- In late 2019 FEMA started tracking testing to their test environment and sending out quarterly reports on the results by jurisdictions.

- December of 2019 the game changing 90 to 360 character display was implemented making it far easier for Alerting Authorities.

- In 2020 realigned jurisdictional boundaries to cover surrounding counties and states.

- In 2021, Two Public Alerting Authority Best Practices workshops have been presented via WebEx.

Strategic Development

Approach and Methodology

The approach of the MN-IPAWS Committee is to been to define the overall state warning strategy more than governing local tactical operations at the public alerting authority or the Emergency Alert System (EAS) Participant stations. As part of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Protocol (SCIP) the committee has planning and implementation life cycles, the MN-IPAWS committee has followed the planning, implementation, and assessment phases since its inception in 2012 worked from the initial work plan.

IPAWS Committee responsibilities

- Develop state policy set forth as guidelines from federal rules and regulations;

- Provide guidance on the establishment of a training program to support the state EAS Plan including public alerting authorities and EAS participants.

- Promote Public Information and Warning capabilities through trained alerting authorities and SECB Education and Outreach committee.

- Maintain its statewide role as an oversight committee with regional representation through workgroups supporting Policy, Infrastructure and Public Information.

- Approve State EAS plan as presented by the Policy work group.

- Promote the use of the federal IPAWS system at professional association conferences, workshops, table tops and training exercises.

Involvement of subject matter experts

Involvement from cellular telecommunications industry is critical to gain knowledge and understanding on how best to educate public alerting authorities on cell phone limitations and capabilities when warning the public.

Goals and objectives

Planning Guidance

To accomplish the given tasks and any others that may come up is the next two years the following guidance has been given.

FCC requirements

We have to maintain the current requirements of CFR 47 part 11 as directed by the FCC, but must realize the changes that the FCC has made to EAS on future enhancements and additions. The planned document should be flexible enough to meet proposals, but also use the guidance set forth by the Communication Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council final report on State EAS Plans.

Goal 1

Increase awareness among Alert Originators regarding public alerting strategies in jurisdictions with English as a Second Language (ESL) populations of 5%+.

Objective

Engage committee members, Alert Originators, and key stakeholders to increase awareness of:
- Jurisdictions with ESL populations of 5%+.
- ESL alerting capabilities.
- ESL alerting 'best practices'.

Actions

- Identify jurisdictions with ESL populations of 5%+.
- Ensure that Alert Originators and key stakeholders are aware of DOJ's guide for providing ESL alerting in 5%+ jurisdictions.
- Develop a 'one pager' and 'best practices guide' regarding ESL alerting strategies.
- Incorporate ESL alerting strategies & resources for ESL alerting into EAS plans.

Metrics for Success

- Jurisdictions with ESL populations of 5%+ are identified.
- Alert Originators and key stakeholders are aware and/or using ESL alert distribution of choice.
- A 'one pager' and 'best practices guide' regarding ESL alerting strategies are published.
- ESL alerting strategies and resources are incorporated into EAS plans.
- ESL alerts are routinely distributed in 5%+ jurisdictions.

Goal 2

Promote adoption of 'back-up' agreements with other alerting authorities to support continuity of operations capabilities.

Objective

Raise awareness among alerting authorities and key stakeholders regarding the need/value of 'back-up agreements' with other alerting authorities.

Actions

- Develop a template for a 'back up agreement'.
- Conduct outreach efforts with alerting authorities and key stakeholders to promote adoption of 'back up agreements'.

Metrics for Success

- A template for a 'back up agreement' has been developed.
- At least 10% of Minnesota's alerting authorities have established a 'backup agreement' with another alerting authority.

Goal 3

Increase awareness among decision makers, emergency responders, Public Information Officers (PIOs), and other key stakeholders regarding IPAWS capabilities and public alerting 'best practices'.

Objective

Engage committee members, Alert Originators, and key stakeholders to:
- Increase awareness regarding IPAWS capabilities.
- Increase utilization of IPAWS capabilities.
- Improve cross-jurisdictional/cross-discipline coordination for alert dissemination.

Actions

Engage committee members, Alert Originators, and key stakeholders to:
- Increase awareness regarding IPAWS capabilities.
- Increase utilization of IPAWS capabilities.
- Improve cross-jurisdictional/cross-discipline coordination for alert dissemination.
- Advocate for the adoption of IPAWS capabilities among local, regional, tribal, and state jurisdictions.
- Identify opportunities for education and outreach regarding IPAWS capabilities.
- Develop 'Fact sheets', 'standards', and/or 'best practice guides' to provide clarity on alerting goals, roles, and functions (e.g., when to send and when not to send alerts, etc.).

Metrics for Success

- At least five outreach opportunities are conducted to educate key stakeholders regarding IPAWS capabilities and public alerting 'best practices'
- 'Fact sheets', 'standards', and/or 'best practice guides' are developed to provide clarity on alerting goals, roles, and functions (when to send and when not to send alerts, etc.).
- 95% of Minnesota jurisdictions are IPAWS trained/aware and have access to IPAWS capabilities.

Goal 4

Incorporate IPAWS capabilities into local, regional, tribal, and state level training exercises.

Objective

Raise awareness among alerting authorities, emergency managers, and other key stakeholders regarding the need/value of including an IPAWS component in training exercises.

Actions

- Advocate for the inclusion of IPAWS capabilities into training exercises.
- Increase awareness among exercise planners regarding IPAWS capabilities.
- Develop exercise related documents and templates that include an IPAWS component.

Metrics for Success

- Alert Originators are included in developing training exercises that include an IPAWS component.
- 25% of Minnesota alerting jurisdictions conduct and/or participate in training exercise opportunities that include an IPAWS component.