



New Jersey Office of
Emergency Management Directive

	EFFECTIVE DATE March 25, 2024	NUMBER NJOEM-13 (2024)
	SUBJECT NJOEM Oversight of State IPAWS Program	
REFERENCE Executive Order 13407 (Bush, 2006); IPAWS Modernization Act of 2015; FEMA’s policies and procedures for IPAWS as contained in www.fema.gov ; Memorandum of Agreement between FEMA and the New Jersey State Police Regarding Use of New Jersey State Police Interoperable System(s) and IPAWS Open Platform for Emergency Networks; NJOEM Emergency Communication Plan; New Jersey State Emergency Operations Plan	EXPIRES N/A	
	RESCINDS N/A	

Pursuant to the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) serves as the coordinator and primary agency for Emergency Support Function (ESF) #2 – Communications, which outlines the capabilities, coordination, responsibilities, and policies for statewide communication systems. These systems provide for coordination of communications capabilities across agency lines and for warning the public during emergencies. Additionally, these systems support communication services and the restoration of vital information systems impacted by an incident.

A primary element of the State’s emergency communication services is the Integrated Public Alert Warning System Open Platform for Emergency Networks (IPAWS-OPEN) that is owned and controlled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A critical function of IPAWS is the ability to send messages to cell phone users within a geofence (e.g. a specific geographic area), which captures a wider audience than Reverse 9-1-1 or other programs that require opt-in by the user. NJOEM is authorized to use the IPAWS-OPEN platform to issue alerts within the State. In accordance with FEMA’s policies, procedures and guidelines for the IPAWS program published on www.FEMA.gov, NJOEM’s consent is required to designate any other entity within the State (including federal military facilities) as an “Alerting Authority” authorized to issue IPAWS alerts.

Previously, NJOEM consented to the designation of some county and local agencies as Alerting Authorities. However, NJOEM has since determined that the issuance of IPAWS-OPEN alerts is best performed exclusively by NJOEM and county offices of emergency management (OEM) for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, technology limitations, the proximity of townships, and the risk of wireless overshoot. These factors create a unique set of challenges to minimize conflicting messaging, ensure the delivery of clear,

concise, and timely messaging to the public and first responders, and avoid overlap, confusion and “alert fatigue” on the part of the public. Therefore, as of the effective date of this Directive, at the local level, NJOEM will only designate county offices of emergency management as IPAWS-OPEN Alerting Authorities. Any currently designated municipal Alerting Authority may continue as such for the remainder of the term of its agreement with FEMA, subject to the transitional rules and operational polices set forth herein. Note: NJOEM may designate certain federal military and other agencies operating within the State as Alerting Authorities for the purpose of issuing IPAWS alerts on the military base or federal property.

This Directive NJOEM-13 (2024) describes the parameters of the IPAWS program within New Jersey, and access rights of county and municipal governments. This Directive does not pertain to State agencies, which shall continue to request IPAWS messaging through NJOEM in accordance with NJOEM’s established procedures. This Directives does not interfere with or impact the use of reverse 9-1-1 or other alerting (Subscriber) systems that may be used by county and municipal agencies.

This Directive consists of the following numbered sections:

Page #

I.	Definitions	2
II.	NJOEM Oversight of the State IPAWS Program	3
III.	Role of the State IPAWS Coordinator	3
IV.	Operational Concepts and Transitional Rules	4
V.	General Procedures for IPAWS Messaging	5
VI.	Effect	6

I. Definitions

The following words and phrases, when used in this Directive, shall have the meanings given below, consistent with federal IPAWS guidance documents.

1. **Alerting Authority** - a jurisdiction with the designated authority to alert and warn the public when there is an impending natural or human-made disaster, threat, or dangerous or missing person.
2. **Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)** – a digital format for exchanging emergency alerts that allows a consistent alert message to be disseminated simultaneously over multiple communications pathways.
3. **Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)** -- FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), to radio and television via the Emergency Alert System (EAS), and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Weather Radio. IPAWS consists of two main parts: IPAWS-OPEN and the National Public Warning System (NPWS).
4. **Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)** -- an integrated public safety system which allows members of the public to receive geographically targeted text-like messages on their mobile phones. WEAs are short emergency messages from authorized

federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial public alerting authorities broadcast from cell towers to WEA-enabled mobile devices in a locally targeted area.

5. **Emergency Alert System (EAS)** – the national public warning system that requires radio and TV broadcasters, cable TV, wireless cable systems, satellite and wireline operators to permit the President to address the Nation within 10 minutes during a national emergency. EAS may be selected as a stand-alone distribution pathway or in combination with other IPAWS distribution pathways.
6. **Collaborative Operating Group (COG)** – a federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial alerting authority that applies for authorization to use IPAWS will be designated as a COG.
7. **State IPAWS Coordinator** – the individual designated by NJOEM to act as the State’s primary point of contact with the FEMA IPAWS program. The State IPAWS Coordinator shall serve as the State representative to review and approve/deny Alerting Authority applications from counties and municipalities and oversee the daily program requirements as set forth in Section III.

II. NJOEM Oversight of the State IPAWS Program

NJOEM oversees the State’s IPAWS Program within New Jersey. As such, NJOEM shall perform the following general responsibilities:

1. Designate a State IPAWS Coordinator (and alternate(s)), who shall perform the duties and responsibilities set forth in Section III.
2. Ensure compliance with any memoranda of understanding or agreement with FEMA for the use or maintenance of IPAWS platform by the State or any local entity.
3. Maintain the NJOEM Emergency Communication Plan for the use of IPAWS.
4. Prepare and publish procedures and guidance for the use of IPAWS messages in life-threatening situations to ensure that they are aligned with FEMA requirements.
5. Monitor compliance with FEMA and State IPAWS requirements and suspend/revoke the right of any Alerting Authority that fails to adhere to the guidance.
6. Maintain and update State technology and infrastructure needed for timely alerting.
7. Ensure sufficient staffing and subject matter expertise to support the IPAWS program.
8. Process requests from local, county and State agencies for IPAWS messaging in a timely manner.
9. Provide support and training exercises pertaining to IPAWS.
10. Complete required proficiency testing as per FEMA policy.

III. Role of the State IPAWS Coordinator

The State IPAWS Coordinator shall perform the following duties and responsibilities.

1. Maintain technical proficiency and subject matter expertise in the use of IPAWS, and conduct training and exercising on the use of IPAWS within New Jersey.

2. Oversee the daily management of the IPAWS system within the State and support fulfillment of NJOEM’s responsibilities in connection with the IPAWS platform, including the prompt review of Alerting Authority applications.
3. Ensure the State's alerting system remains in compliance with federal and State regulations for emergency alerting.
4. The State IPAWS Coordinator shall have responsibility for coordinating and disseminating emergency alerts and warnings to the public as follows.
 - a. During emergencies, the State IPAWS Coordinator (or designee) will collaborate across lines of government to ensure a unified approach to alerting and warning. This includes crafting clear and effective emergency alert messages that are compliant with the Common Alerting Protocol.
 - i. For statewide alerts and for geographic areas where NJOEM serves as the Alerting Authority (or if a local Alerting Authority is unable to issue an alert): The State IPAWS Coordinator (or designee) will promptly review the proposed message content and requested geofence to ensure compliance with FEMA and State criteria, and process the IPAWS message or deny the request. The State IPAWS Coordinator (or designee) shall consult with NJOEM Command, as needed.
 1. NJOEM retains authority to broadcast alerts directly even when the local Alerting Authority has the ability to do so.
 - ii. For geographic areas where a county OEM, municipal agency or federal agency is designated as an Alerting Authority: The IPAWS Coordinator (or designee) will monitor IPAWS message traffic for compliance with standards, and immediately notify an Alerting Authority of non-compliance. The State IPAWS Coordinator may initiate a suspension or revocation as set forth in Section V.
 - b. As part of pre-incident planning and preparedness, the IPAWS Coordinator will create customized alerts for specific hazards that are relevant to New Jersey. The State IPAWS Coordinator shall liaise with county offices of emergency management and other partners to establish pre-incident messaging for large venues and high threat areas.

IV. Operational Concepts and Transitional Rules

1. Operational Concepts
 - a. NJOEM serves as the only designated State-level Alerting Authority authorized to issue IPAWS messaging on behalf of any State agency.¹
 - b. NJOEM may authorize county OEMs and certain federal agencies to be designated as Alerting Authorities to independently utilize IPAWS for

¹ As a bi-state agency, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA NY/NJ) has been designated as an Alerting Authority by FEMA. The State IPAWS Coordinator is in communication with PA NY/NJ regarding operational concepts for IPAWS alerts within New Jersey.

emergency alert and warning purposes subject to compliance with FEMA and State IPAWS requirements.

- c. NJOEM shall be the exclusive provider of IPAWS services for a given county within the State if that county is not an Alerting Authority.
- d. All IPAWS activities conducted by NJOEM and authorized Alerting Authorities will adhere to federal and State regulations and guidelines governing the use of the system, including testing requirements.
- e. To effectively issue Alerts, Warnings, and Notifications (AWN), NJOEM and all designated Alerting Authorities must ensure internal policies, procedures, protocols and enabling technologies are in place and personnel are trained and competent to execute AWN functions.
- f. NJOEM will work with Alerting Authorities to ensure their seamless integration of IPAWS into the State's emergency management system.
- g. NJOEM will regularly assess and enhance its IPAWS capabilities considering technological advancements and evolving best practices.
- h. Feedback from county and municipal emergency management partners will be solicited and used to improve the IPAWS system.
- i. Accountability measures must be in place to ensure the responsible and ethical use of IPAWS for emergency alerting.

2. Transitional Rules and Requirement for Currently Authorized Municipal Users

- a. A New Jersey municipality with a current MOA as an IPAWS Alerting Authority as of the effective date of this Directive may continue as such for the remainder of its term. However, the MOA will not be renewed upon expiration.
- b. Any municipality that has started the MOA application process to become an IPAWS Alerting Authority, but has not yet had its MOA application signed by the State IPAWS Coordinator, will be denied.

V. General Procedures for IPAWS Messaging

All IPAWS messaging requests from county agencies and municipal agencies must be submitted through channels. Municipal agencies must submit the request to the municipal OEM for forwarding to the county OEM. County agencies will submit all requests to the county OEM. IPAWS message requests from State agencies shall continue to be submitted to NJOEM per standing procedures.

1. IPAWS messages to be issued by NJOEM on behalf of county/municipal agencies:
 - a. If the county OEM is not a designated Alerting Authority, the county OEM coordinator or designee must contact the assigned NJOEM Emergency Response Bureau (ERB) Regional Representative to request an IPAWS alert. When operationally feasible, the County OEM should email a formal written request to the ERB Representative with the specific reasons and the proposed language and geofence.

- b. The ERB Representative will verify the specific emergency communication needs of the county OEM. The ERB Representative may expedite the request to the State IPAWS Coordinator or designee for advance consultation pending submission of a request to EMMIT, the SEOC reporting platform.
 - c. A request must be submitted into EMMIT for ESF 2 outlining the reasons for requesting access to the IPAWS platform, the specific message content, and the geographic area within which the message should be disseminated. Note: in exigent circumstances, the EMMIT request may be documented after the fact, if authorized by the State IPAWS Coordinator or designee.
 - d. The IPAWS request will be processed in a timely manner by NJOEM personnel, who will advise the county if the request has been approved, and the message content being disseminated.
2. IPAWS Messages Issued Directly by County, Municipal and NJOEM-authorized Federal Alerting Authorities
- a. An Alerting Authority may only use the IPAWS system per Section I.1. IPAWS messages must be detailed, accurate, and adhere to FEMA IPAWS policies and procedures.
 - b. An Alerting Authority may only broadcast messages within the boundaries of its jurisdiction.
 - c. A county OEM will notify the ERB Regional Representative when the county OEM issues an IPAWS alert. NJOEM will coordinate messaging impacting multiple counties.
 - d. For full situational awareness at the county level, a municipal Alerting Authority (operating under the Transitional Rules and Requirements under Section IV) should notify the county OEM in advance of the issuance of an IPAWS alert. The county OEM should then inform the assigned ERB Regional Representative of any IPAWS alert being issued by a municipal Alerting Authority.
 - e. An Alerting Authority that fails to adhere to the provisions set forth in this Directive and other NJOEM and FEMA guidance may have its IPAWS rights suspended, and/or the MOA not renewed depending on the circumstances.

VI. Effect:

This order shall take effect immediately.



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