



Alerts, Warnings, Notifications Oh My!

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Selecting the Right (Best) Tool

- Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)
 - Situation that can cause death, serious injury, or significant inconvenience.
 - Urgency requires immediate alert.
 - It is NOT a replacement for an Opt-In Mass Notification System.

There never has been, there never will be, a silver bullet for disseminating warnings. One technology is insufficient.

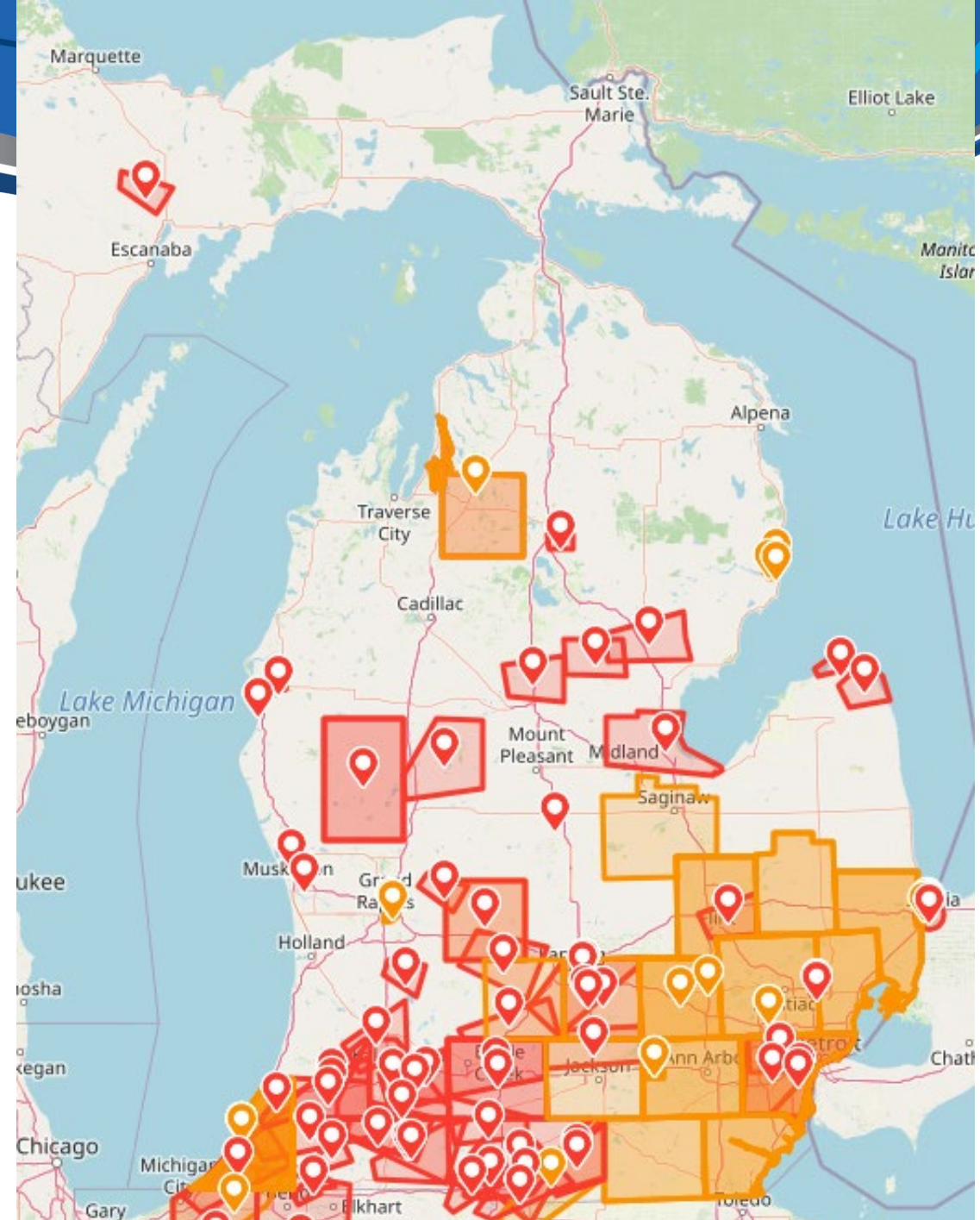
– Dr. Dennis Mileti

- OR someone else will post what they think...

Multiple alerting methods reduce “milling time” for the public!

2024 Michigan WEAs

- 105 WEA messages to date.
- Most are automated National Weather Service Warnings.
- Viewer at <https://warn.pbs.org>





WEA Handling

Each event code has a default...
...but you can override.

Imminent Threat:

- People could die or be seriously injured if they do not get this info NOW.

Public Safety:

- There is a significant inconvenience that will not kill you, but...



When the Threat is Over

- Cell towers repeat the WEA every few minutes **until your expiration!**
 - Intended for those coming into the area after it was issued.
- **Cancel** = Cell towers stop sending initial message.
 - **Message is no longer seen on phones.**
- **Update** = Cell towers replace initial message with new.
 - **Message is seen on phone.**
 - Not all providers allow you to update the WEA.



Update/Cancel Options

For All Clear:

- Send an Update message, instead of Cancel + new message.

Don't send a second message without cancelling the first!

- Now two messages are circulating on cell towers.

Problems will arise with very long WEA durations when no Cancel or Update messages are sent after incident ends.

Writing Effective WEA Messages



SENDER

201703,ReadyKern,Kern County OES

WEA 360CH EN

create message

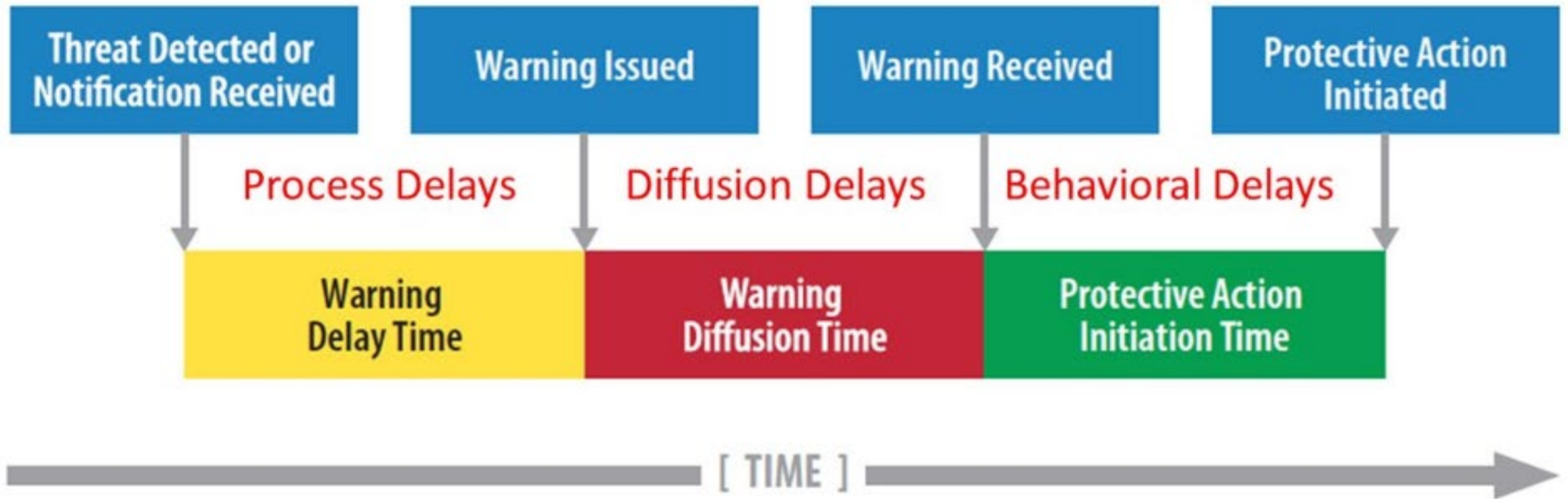


Messaging Myths

- **PUBLIC WILL PANIC IF WE TELL THEM**
 - Proper actions often referred to as “panic.”
 - “Freezing” is what we do not want to happen.
- **SHORT WARNINGS ARE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND**
 - Maybe? but...
 - People WANT information and will seek it out before acting (“milling”).
- **FALSE ALARMS = CRY WOLF**
 - Public understands mistakes can happen.
 - OWN YOUR MISTAKE IF IT HAPPENS!



Minimize Delays in Public Action





Good Messages...

- Say who they are from.
- Explain what is happening.
- Describe where it is occurring.
- Tell the public what do to.
- Provide a link for updates.
- DO NOT USE JARGON.
- DO NOT USE BLOCK NUMBERS.
- DO NOT ABBREVIATE.

Message Content

Source

Hazard/Consequences

Location/Population

Protective Action

Protective Action Time

Expiration Time



Eliminate Insider Language

- Suspect or Subject or Individual.
- Fled on foot.
- Shelter in place.
- Suspect is discharging rounds.



Content

Follow the research!

*YELLING IS NOT THE WAY...

MESSAGE CONTENT	DESCRIPTION	INSTEAD OF THIS...	WRITE THIS...
SOURCE	Use a local, familiar, trusted source. Spell it out completely (no acronyms)	[no source included]	Spark Emergency Management
		SEM	Spark Emergency Management
		SCSO	Spark County Sheriffs Office
HAZARD	Provide the name of the hazard for which the warning is being sent. Be as specific as you are able to be about the type of threat affecting the populations.	Evacuate	WILDFIRE WARNING
		Shelter in place	TOXIC GAS LEAK
HAZARD IMPACTS	Describe the impacts that may occur as a result of the threat and the reasons that a person should take protective action	[no impacts included]	Exposure to toxic gas can cause difficulty breathing.
LOCATION	Use familiar landmarks and known boundaries in addition to city/county names. In some cases, location includes where people should go as well as the areas affected.	Zone 20B	The Mountain Shadows and Peregrine neighborhoods in Spark City; West of I-25 and south of the Academy.
		In this area	Five blocks surrounding the Spark City library between 1st and 5th streets and Ferris and Sloan.
PROTECTIVE ACTIONS	Tell people what they can do to protect themselves. Be specific and instruct how to take action.	Evacuate	Leave area now. Do not delay.
		Shelter in place	If you are indoors, go an interior room on the the lowest level of a sturdy building. Close doors, window, and vents. If you are outdoors, cover your mouth and nose with a cloth and get inside as quickly as possible.

Message Content	
Source	★
Hazard	★
Hazard Impact	★
Location	★
Protective action guidance	★

NOT OFFICIAL - Sample Alert Message

Emergency Alert

now



Florida Emergency Management:
DESTRUCTIVE WINDS & FLOODING are expected along the west Florida coast & areas inland starting WEDNESDAY. Power & other utilities may be out for weeks. 911 may fail. LEAVE if directed by local officials. TAKE important DOCUMENTS & SUPPLIES for at least one week. CHECK hurricanes.gov for forecasts & floridadisaster.org for info.

Message Content	
Source	★
Hazard	★
Hazard Impact	★
Location	★
Protective action guidance	★

WEA 360CH EN

RIEMA: Mosquito larvicide pellets to be dropped in Great Swamp Management Area via helicopter today. Avoid the Area.
dem.ri.gov/mosquito

Message Content	
Source	★
Hazard	★
Hazard Impact	
Location	
Protective action guidance	★

A message from the Rochester Office of Emergency Management. A hazardous materials release has occurred LOCATION. Stay away from the area and remain upwind to avoid possible exposure. Again, avoid this area and remain upwind.

Message Content	
Source	
Hazard	
Hazard Impact	
Location	
Protective action guidance	

ORIGINAL MESSAGE



EMERGENCY ALERTS

now

Emergency Alert

EAST WENATCHEE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS ISSUED A CIVIL EMERGENCY. SHELTER IN PLACE IN THE AREA. THIS CONCLUDES THE MESSAGE FROM THE EAST WENATCHEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Message Content	
Source	
Hazard	★
Hazard Impact	
Location	
Protective action guidance	★

Armed suspects fled during a pursuit in the area armed and dangerous. Lock doors windows

Message Content	
Source	★
Hazard	
Hazard Impact	
Location	
Protective action guidance	★

There are scam calls appearing to originate from the Adams County Sheriff's office. Do not agree to pay any money to any law enforcement agency over the telephone. Hang Up and immediately call the Sheriff's Department at 402-461-7181 with any questions.

Message Content
Source
Hazard
Hazard Impact
Location
Protective action guidance

WEA 360CH EN

Shelter in place

Message Content

Source

Hazard

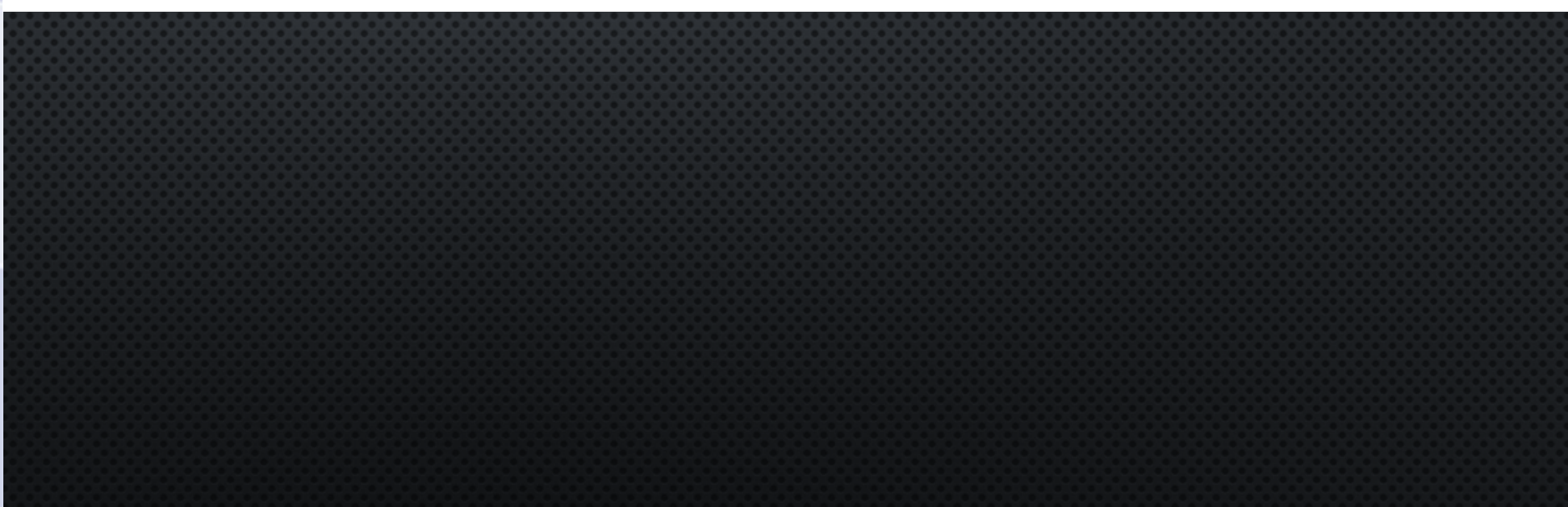
Hazard Impact

Location

Protective action guidance



WEA 360CH EN
This is a test msg. Please ignore.





Michigan IPAWS Software Tool

- Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) has a statewide contract for the IPAWS alerting software tool, CodeRED. Available free to all Public Act 390 emergency management programs.
- Can be primary IPAWS dissemination software.
 - Add-on contract available for Opt-In Mass Notification System.
- Also usable for backup if you have a different primary software.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a list of IPAWS capable software providers on their website.



Need IPAWS Access?

- At a minimum, ALL counties should become IPAWS Alerting Authorities.
 - Jurisdictions smaller than a county must have permission from county to become an IPAWS Alerting Authority and can only use WEA.
- Follow the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) 4 step process.
bit.ly/IPAWS-signup
 1. IS-247 Course – IPAWS for Alert Originators.
 2. Select IPAWS Compatible Software.
 3. Apply for Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the FEMA.
 4. Apply for Public Alerting Permissions within the IPAWS Portal.
- Create and practice your Alert, Warning, and Notifications Plan.



IPAWS User Portal

- FEMA MOA Renewal
- Alerting Authority contact info
- Training and Support



Search...

SEARCH



ROB DALE ▾



ORGANIZATIONS

CONTACTS

APPLICATIONS



Organization

MI Ingham County OHSEM

Edit

Upload Files

COG ID

COG-200274

COG Type

Local

Phone

Test Certificate Expires

Live Cert Expires

10/19/2024

Organization Status

IPAWS Access Approved



Cross Border MOU

Ingham / Eaton / Clinton Counties

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allows for messaging across the county lines.
 - Accidentally or intentionally.
- Also allows full ability to “Alert on Behalf”.
 - Counties use different providers.
 - Or if Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is overwhelmed in the response.





IPAWS Program Planning Toolkit

- Create your customized Alerting Program Plan.
 - Tailored to your entity.
 - Downloadable as a Word document.
- Develop templates for public alert messaging.
 - At least a good starting point.

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system/public-safety-officials/toolkit>

IPAWS Assistive Tools Platform (ATP)

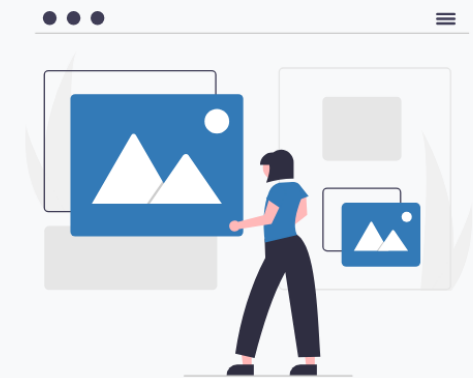


- Message Viewer (for verifying monthly proficiency demonstrations).
- Message Design Dashboard (MDD).
- More in the future...



Message Viewer

[Lab Message Viewer](#)



Message Design Dashboard

[Go To MDD](#)

Public Alerting Work Group



Public Alerting Work Group

[Home](#) > [Interoperability Board and Work Groups](#) > [Public Alerting Work Group](#)

Public Alerting Work Group (WG)

The Public Alerting Work Group (WG) is a designated group of emergency management, public safety, and related personnel with extensive experience in public safety communications. The group serves as subject-matter experts to the Michigan Public Safety Communications Interoperability Board (MPSCIB) regarding matters of alerting the public during emergencies and disasters.

www.Michigan.gov/publicalerting



The Moral Of The Story

- Be comfortable with the knob-ology of your platform.
 - Exercise with the system you use.
- Be comfortable generating messages.
 - Exercise the message development, not just the system.
- Use the WEA for life-safety threats.
 - Or major, major, major inconveniences.
 - *Major.*
- The WEA is not a replacement for a mass notification system.
 - People can – and do – turn their WEA alerts off...

Contact Information



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