What is IPAWS?

During an emergency, alert and warning officials need to provide the public with life-saving information quickly. The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a modernization and integration of the nation's alert and warning infrastructure. IPAWS will integrate new and existing public alert and warning systems and technologies. Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local government alert and warning systems will be able to integrate with the national alert and warning infrastructure providing a broader range of message options and communications pathways for the delivery of alert and warning information to the American people before, during, and after a disaster by providing one message over more media to more people for the preservation of life and property.

FEMA is building the IPAWS capabilities to ensure that under all conditions the President of the United States can alert and warn the American people. When the President is not using the IPAWS capabilities, IPAWS will be available to support State, local, tribal, and territorial alert and warning authorities. Local emergency managers may choose to use the IPAWS alert services and may also integrate local systems that use CAP standards with the IPAWS infrastructure. IPAWS and other CAP enabled systems will give public safety officials an effective way to alert and warn the public about serious emergencies using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), the Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS), National Weather Radio (NWR) and other public alerting systems from a single interface. IPAWS will save time when time matters, while maximizing the reach and impact of alerts before, during, and after an emergency.

IPAWS Program Vision:

Timely Alert and Warning to American People in the preservation of life and property.

IPAWS Program Mission:

Provide integrated services and capabilities to local, state, and federal authorities that enable them to alert and warn their respective communities via multiple communications methods.

IPAWS Program Strategic Goals:

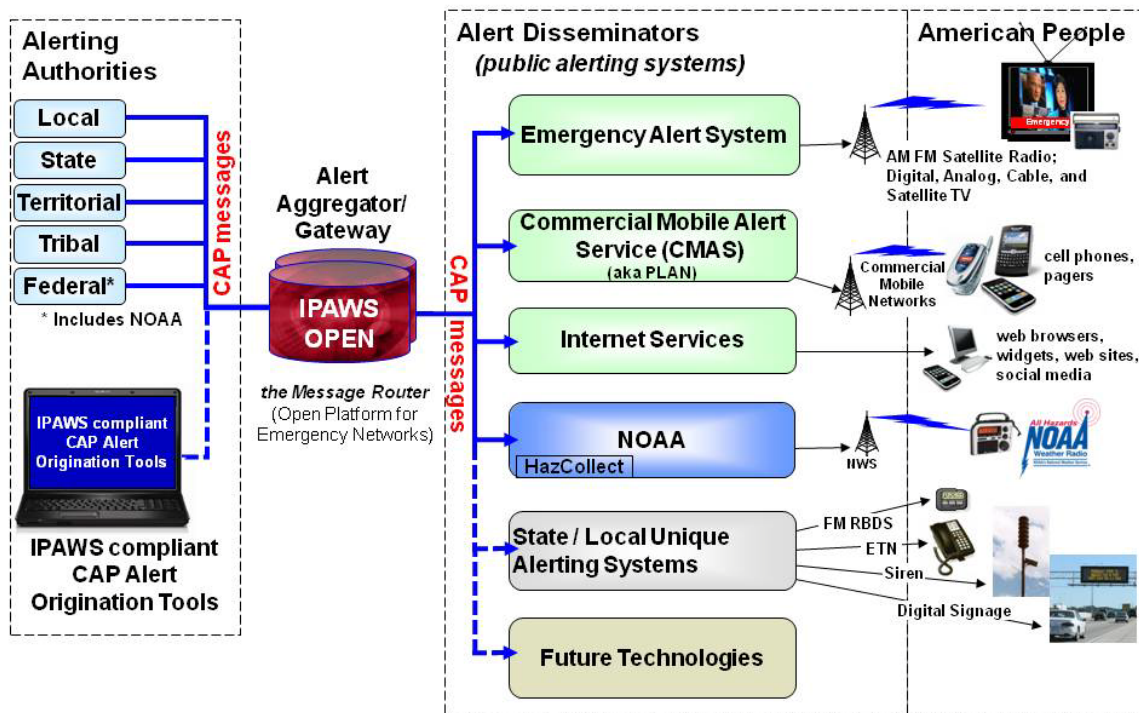Goal 1 – Create and maintain an integrated interoperable environment for alert and warning
Goal 2 – Make alert and warning more effective
Goal 3 – Strengthen the Resilience of IPAWS Infrastructure

Executive Order 13407

Executive Order 13407 gave the US Department of Homeland Security the responsibility for modernizing the public alert and warning system, ensuring the capability of distributing alerts through a variety of modes and based on a variety of risk factors, such as proximity to a disaster. DHS charged FEMA with this responsibility. FEMA and its federal partners, the Federal Communications Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service and the DHS Science and Technology Directorate are working together to transform the Nation's alert and warning system to enable rapid dissemination of authenticated alert information over as many communications devices as possible.

The FEMA IPAWS architecture diagram is designed to illustrate the IPAWS concept of operations--alert origination, and alert aggregation utilizing the Open Platform for Emergency Networks (IPAWS-OPEN), and alert dissemination technologies. Multiple types of Emergency Alert System (EAS) devices, commercial mobile services, internet services, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration services, State and local alerting systems, including a variety of commercial encoder/decoder devices, and alerting technologies for persons with disabilities, monitor the IPAWS-OPEN system for CAP messages to alarm equipment based on the message types and geo-location information contained in the messages.

Standards Based Alert Message data exchange format, alert message aggregation, shared, trusted access & distribution networks, alerts delivered to more public interface devices.

For more information, contact the IPAWS project management office at ipaws@dhs.gov , or log on to http://www.fema.gov/emergency/ipaws/index.shtm.