Background

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through your mobile carrier. Government partners include local and state agencies, FEMA, the Federal Communications Division (FCC), the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Weather Service. No signup is required to receive these alerts.

- The NWS began to participate in the WEA service in June 2012.

- You'll receive extreme weather warnings, local emergencies that require evacuation or immediate action, AMBER alerts, and Presidential alerts during a national emergency.

- This is a free service offered by over 100 wireless carriers.

- WEA use radio technology to broadcast the alert from cell towers to mobile devices in the area of the threat.

- WEA will look like a text message, be no more than 90 characters, and include a special tone and vibration.

- The message will typically show the type of alert, expected duration, any action you should take, and the govt. agency issuing the alert.

NWS Alert Types

- Tornado Warning

- Flash Flood Warning

- Extreme Wind Warning

- Dust Storm Warning

- Hurricane Warning

- Typhoon Warning

- Tsunami Warning

- *These alerts are considered severe and extreme life threatening situations, which is why FEMA pushes these specific warnings through IPAWS to your mobile device.*

FAQ

- **How does the NWS activate the Wireless Emergency Alert on my cell phone?** The NWS pushes our suite of warnings, advisories, and watches to the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). When they reach IPAWS, they are pushed to commercial wireless carriers who broadcast the alert from cell towers in the threat area to your cell phone. Once an alert is in IPAWS, the alert may be made available through a variety of channels for further distribution, such as broadcast over television/radio stations, sirens, display on highway signs, desktop and mobile alert software application, and the WEA system.

- **What if I travel into a threat area after a WEA message is sent?** Your WEA-capable device will receive the message when you enter the area.

- **If during an emergency, I can't make or receive calls or text messages due to network congestion, will I still be able to receive a WEA message?** Yes, WEA messages are not affected by network congestion.

- **What is the difference between the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and WEA?** EAS alerts are sent to TV, radio, cable, and satellite services. WEA are messages sent to a mobile device.

Why Use NWSChat?

- NWSChat is a tool for situational awareness, sharing critical warning decisions or possible warnings, all of which are essential to the NWS's mission of saving lives and property.

- The goal of NWSChat is for everyone to have the same information at the same time.

- Prior to a high impact weather event, forecasters will begin to discuss the potential hazards for the region for the event. Any questions you have can then be answered through chat, and the entire group will benefit from the discussion. During and following a high impact weather event, NWS, media and emergency management partners can provide storm reports through Chat. This allows everyone to utilize the information to make effective decisions.

- The exchange of information is extremely beneficial to both the NWS and our partners.

Do's & Don'ts

- Do ask questions. There are no dumb questions.

- Do include your agency/jurisdiction in your handle (em-name.county, media-station.name, fire-county.name, etc.) and in the chat message.

- Do change your password regularly so you can log in during bad weather without any issues.

- Do keep topics professional and relevant to the ongoing situation during an event.

- Do be in the correct chat room.

- Don't send private messages to the NWS.

Chat Rooms

- **FWDChat**: Open to anyone with an NWSChat account.

- **FWDEMAChat**: Have to be allowed access into the room (Emergency Management, Public Safety, Amateur Radio Network Controller…).

- Communicate your important decisions in both rooms, especially **FWDChat**!

- Be sure to read prior messages to make sure your question hasn't already be answered, especially during active weather.