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Nationwide Emergency Alert System Test Scheduled for Tuesday, November 17

West Virginians may hear a one-minute test message on radio and television; no action is required.

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Emergency Management Division (WVEMD) is reminding residents that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), will conduct a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at approximately 2:20 p.m. Eastern Time.

The test will assess how participating broadcasters and communications providers receive and relay a national test message. Testing helps identify technical and operational issues before the system is needed in an actual emergency. FEMA is required by law to conduct a nationwide test of the public alert and warning system at least once every three years. If the test cannot be conducted on November 17, the backup date is Thursday, December 3, 2026.

What To Expect

Radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, satellite radio and television providers, and wireline video providers across West Virginia and the nation will interrupt normal programming for about one minute to relay the test message. The message will state that it is a test. Normal programming will resume when the test ends.

Wireless Emergency Alerts sent to cell phones are not part of this test, so residents should not expect an alert on their mobile devices. The test is limited to broadcast and video services and will not affect electric service or other utilities.

No action is required by the public.

"Tuesday's test is a routine but important check that helps make sure this system works when West Virginians need it most," said WVEMD Director Dr. Matthew Blackwood. "If you hear the message on your radio or television, there is nothing you need to do. We encourage everyone to use this as a reminder to sign up for emergency alerts offered in their county and to make sure their household has more than one way to receive warnings."

Help Spread the Word

WVEMD encourages residents, county emergency management offices, schools, businesses, and community partners to share this reminder so friends, family, and neighbors know what to expect and are not alarmed when the message airs.

For more information, visit FEMA's 2026 Nationwide Emergency Alert System Test webpage at fema.gov or contact the West Virginia Emergency Management Division at 304-558-5380.

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