

# CIEP ALERT

COALITION ON INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PLANNING  
A Statewide Disability Advisory Group of the WASILC



## TAKING IT “EAS”-Y



Jim House was watching the news one morning on KONG TV. During a commercial break, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) test appeared on the screen.

The screenshot on the left raised some serious concerns about the readability of the text in the green scroll bar at the top.

EAS is a nationwide public warning system that requires broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio services (SDARS), and direct broadcast satellite services (DBS) to provide the communications capability for the President to address the American public during a national emergency. The system may also be used by state, tribal, and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as AMBER alerts and weather information targeted to specific areas.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the National Weather Service (NWS) send out EAS alerts at the federal level under the direction of the President. FEMA is responsible for implementation of the national-level activation of the EAS, tests, and exercises. NWS develops emergency weather information to alert the public about imminent dangerous weather conditions.

The FCC rules establish technical standards for the EAS, procedures for participants to follow when EAS is activated, and testing protocols. Additionally, the FCC ensures that the state, tribal, and local EAS plans conform to its rules and regulations. One requirement is that the EAS system must be tested by all television and radio broadcasters each month.

The Emergency Management Division is Washington State’s designated agency to lead in disaster preparedness and response efforts. Under the Emergency Service Function for Communications (ESF #2), several groups and agencies manage different aspects of the communication infrastructure including public networks that disseminate emergency

notifications. As the CIEP Disability Integration Manager, Jim monitors an email discussion group [EAS-WA] where engineers and technicians share reports of EAS tests, and when actual warning messages are activated.

Jim posted an email of the screen shot to the EAS-WA group, and Dick Trumbo, the Technology Manager at KONG TV replied. Jim pointed out that the text in the crawl was going too fast for viewers to read, and that there was a poor contrast between the white text and the light green background.

Jim questioned if effective communication is the goal here, how can people respond if they cannot read the message in the first place.

As a result, Trumbo slowed the speed of the crawl, and changed the font to Arial with shadows to enhance the contrast of the text from the background as follows:



The color of the background is important because a green background indicates the EAS message is only a test and no action needs to be taken; an orange background means that the message contains important information; and a red background signals that an actual emergency is occurring and contains instructions for appropriate and immediate response.

Thanks to Mr. Trumbo for taking the time to listen and make changes as needed. Both agreed that effective communication is the ultimate goal for EAS alerts.



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**Editor's Note from Jim:** Welcome again to [CIEP Alert!](#) As the CIEP Disability Integration Manager, I bring a variety of views to this newsletter and welcome your involvement so feel free to share this with your friends.

The Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP) is a statewide advisory group that brings expertise and perspectives into disaster preparedness based on access and functional needs (AFN) faced by people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations.

Are you interested in being a CIEP stakeholder? Do you have any comments or suggestions, for future issues? Please email Jim House at [HouseJ@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:HouseJ@dshs.wa.gov). The same email address can also be used to subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter.

## It's All About Ability!

**Q:** How can people with disabilities help us during an emergency?.

**A:** People with disabilities bring new perspectives to the nuts and bolts of emergency management. They encounter barriers in effective communication, physical access, program access all their lives. Some of their daily coping strategies are also applicable during times of emergency. There are several ways for emergency managers to connect with local disability resources in the community.

- An Accessible CERT class is a great opportunity for community members to discover new skills.
- Participate or form a Disability Advisory Group. Ideal stakeholders in the group include: representatives from community-based cross-disability organizations and other groups that serve people with a specific type(s) of disability.
- Work with CIEP to review your Community Emergency Response Plan. CIEP can provide technical assistance and help point out issues to spark discussions with disability advocates in your local area,

One thing we cover is compliance in providing public notices of public health, safety, and welfare in a language other than English (SB 5046). Because of the widespread use of American Sign Language in the State of Washington, and its civil right status, CIEP takes the position that ASL be included in all non-English emergency notification efforts, and also that messages in English are to be disseminated in both audible AND visual formats.

## ODHH Hosts Accessible CERT Course for WA State Employees

Jim House from CIEP joined a team of new CERT instructors to train a new group of Washington State employees with disabilities. The Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing hosted the three-day Accessible CERT training with a focus on Access and Functional Needs. Fire Station #34 in Lacey was the site for a mock disaster drill on the third day where all 14 students demonstrated what they have learned in the classroom. Congratulations and welcome to CERT!



## Contact CIEP:

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## News & Resources

### RECENT NEWS:

Exploring Lewis County 911's new, Next Generation system

[https://tdn.com/news/local/exploring-lewis-county-s-new-next-generation-system/article\\_a7f376e5-3fc5-521f-8819-8debef41a5d1.html](https://tdn.com/news/local/exploring-lewis-county-s-new-next-generation-system/article_a7f376e5-3fc5-521f-8819-8debef41a5d1.html)

America is Not Ready for Disability Disaster Response in the Coming Hurricane Season

<https://psmag.com/environment/disability-disaster-response-in-2018-hurricane-season>

### TRAINING RESOURCES:

FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI): IS-368: Including People With Disabilities & Others With Access & Functional Needs in Disaster Operations

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-368>

Accessible CERT Training:

Redmond, WA—Fall 2018 dates TBD

View news coverage of 2017 training at:

<https://redmondcert.org/redmond-cert-program/in-the-news/>



## Coming Events:

CIEP Quarterly Meetings Note: All meetings begin at 10:00am and end at 11:30am.

WHEN: Next meeting: 9/12/2018 [New date]

Future meetings: 12/12/2018 3/20/2019

WHERE: DVR Headquarters, 4565 7th Ave. SE Lacey, WA 98503 (Conference Room)

Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) Quarterly Meetings

Day 1: 9:00am - 4:00pm Day 2: 9:00am - 2:00pm

WHEN: 10/11-12/2018

WHERE: Red Lion River Inn, 700 N Division St., Spokane, WA 99202

On Day 1 of the WASILC quarterly meetings, a panel discussion and public forum is held from 1:00 to 3:30 pm to gather information and advice from the disability community, consumers, service providers, and the public to identify what is working in their community, as well as identify gaps and barriers.

All CIEP and WASILC Quarterly Meetings are open to everyone, per the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30). ASL interpreters are provided. For all other Reasonable Accommodation Requests, please contact Jim House at [HouseJ@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:HouseJ@dshs.wa.gov) at least two weeks prior to the meeting.