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## TWO TESTS FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TO BE CONDUCTED NEXT WEEK

Next week, two tests will be conducted to assess the emergency communication systems used to notify citizens of dangerous situations.

On Tuesday, September 18, a final test of the outdoor warning system in Norfolk will be conducted at 9:00 a.m. Bi-weekly tests of the outdoor warning system will begin again next spring.

On Thursday, September 20, 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) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). These tests will assess the operational readiness of the infrastructure for distribution of a national message and determine whether improvements are needed.

The WEA test message will be sent to cell phones that are connected to wireless providers participating in WEA. This portion of the test will commence at 1:18 p.m. CST. During this time, WEA compatible cell phones that are turned on, within range of an active cell tower, and whose wireless carrier participates in WEA should be capable of receiving the test message. This means that just about every phone at your work place will receive the text, which will likely set off an audible alarm for a short time, at the same time. Some cell phones will not receive the test message, and cell phones should only receive the message once.

The message will have a header that reads “Presidential Alert” and says:

“THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.”

The WEA system is used to warn the public about dangerous weather, missing children, and other critical situations through alerts on cell phones. This test will use the same special tone and vibrations as with all WEA messages (i.e. Tornado Warning, AMBER Alert). Users cannot opt out of the WEA test.

The EAS is made available to EAS participants (i.e. radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, satellite radio and television providers, and wireline video providers) and is scheduled to last approximately one minute. This portion of the test will commence at 1:20 p.m. CST. The test message will be similar to regular monthly EAS test messages with which the public is familiar.

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The EAS message will include a reference to the WEA test:

“THIS IS A TEST of the National Emergency Alert System. This system was developed by broadcast and cable operations in voluntary cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, and local authorities to keep you informed in the event of an emergency. If this had been an actual emergency, an official message would have followed the tone alert you heard at the start of this message. A similar wireless emergency alert test message has been sent to all cell phones nationwide. Some cell phones will receive the message; others will not. No action is required.”

This is the fourth EAS nationwide test and the first national WEA test. Previous EAS national tests were conducted in September 2011, 2016, and 2017.

If circumstances, such as a major weather event, cause this nationwide test to be postponed, the back-up date is Wednesday, October 3, 2018.

Additional information about the National Test of the Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts, and a list of questions and answers about the test can be found online at:

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-alert-test>

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