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ILLINOIS CHAPTER

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Date: October 25, 2011

**Nationwide Test Of The Emergency Alert System Anticipated To Increase Calls
To 9-1-1 Systems State-Wide**

The first nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will take place on Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 1:00 PM (Central Standard Time). Conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) this test may last up to three and a half minutes.

The EAS is a national alert and warning system which enables the President of the United States to address the public during emergencies. Local and State EAS systems are tested regularly; however there has never been a single nationwide test. This alert will include broadcast radio and television stations, cable television, satellite radio and television services, and wireline video service.

During the November 9th test, the public will hear an audio message stating "This is a test," which will be the same for radio and television. Due to limitations of the EAS, the video test message may not be the same. In some instances the background image that appears on a television may indicate "this is a test" but in other cases there may be no image at all.

The public is encouraged to share this information with family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to reduce the potential for increased calls to local police and fire departments or to 9-1-1.

This event should serve as a reminder that everyone should establish an emergency plan and preparedness kit for themselves and their families. Information on how to prepare and stay informed in the event of an actual emergency can be found at www.Ready.gov.

The Illinois Chapter of The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) is a state-wide leader committed to providing complete public safety communications expertise, professional development, technical assistance, advocacy and outreach to benefit our members and the public.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU ANNOUNCES UPDATES TO THE NOVEMBER 9, 2011 NATIONWIDE EAS TEST

On November 9, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time¹ (EST), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will conduct the first-ever nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The purpose of the test is to assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS as a way to alert the public of national emergencies.

The EAS *Third Report and Order*, which adopted the rule allowing for nationwide testing of the EAS, delegated authority to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) to determine, in consultation with FEMA and other EAS stakeholders, as appropriate, various operational procedures for implementing national tests of the EAS, including the duration of the test.²

On August 23, 2011, the Bureau released a Public Notice addressing operational procedures for the Nationwide EAS Test, which, among other things, stated that the test would last for “approximately three minutes.”³ On October 26, 2011, the FCC released a Public Notice announcing the availability of a Nationwide EAS Test Handbook (*Handbook*) providing EAS Participants with operational instructions for the test and which also stated that the test would last for “approximately three minutes.”⁴

After a careful review of the technical elements of the test, FEMA and the FCC have concluded that a thirty-second test will allow the agencies to effectively assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS as a way to alert the public of national emergencies with limited disruption to the public. Today’s public notice supersedes any prior Public Notice, and announces that a revised *Handbook* reflecting the new thirty second test length has been posted at www.fcc.gov/nationwideeastest.