

Kanawha Putnam Emergency Management Plan Functional Annex	
Public Warning Revised December 2025; Reviewed Biennially	A01
NRP Coordination:	ESF #2 – Communications
Primary Agency:	Emergency Management
Support Agencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 911 Dispatch Centers ▪ National Weather Service ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Fire Service ▪ Emergency Medical Services ▪ Traditional Media ▪ HAM Radio Operators

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

1. This plan deals with the protocols and guidelines for warning the public and first responders of a potential, impending emergency situation.

B. Scope of Work

1. The plan will address protocols and strategies for notifying the public and first responders about emergency or potential disaster situations affecting the local area using currently available assets.

II. Situation and Assumptions

- A. Emergency management operations often begin with warning of the public as necessary.
- B. The function of providing timely Public Warning is an imperative local government task.

- C. Public Warning efforts can mitigate loss of life and property by allowing the public and response agencies to take protective actions.
- D. The objective of Public Warning is to alert the public to monitor the television, commercial radio, internet, or phone for information regarding an impending emergency. Thereby, allowing them the opportunity to take protective action.
- E. Kanawha and Putnam counties are prone to a variety of emergency situations that can rapidly affect the safety of lives and property.
- F. Certain members of the population may be unable to take protective action on their own.
- G. Warning sirens are throughout the two counties to serve as outdoor notification devices.
- H. Public safety assets, specifically, emergency vehicles with sirens can be deployed for early warning solutions.
- I. Public safety officials are trained to activate public warning mechanisms.
- J. The Charleston Forecast Office of the National Weather Service engages in public warnings for weather emergencies.

III. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. The National Weather Service is the primary source of forecasts and warnings of weather and flood conditions for the United States. The National Weather Service operates continuously broadcasting weather radio stations (NOAA All Hazard Radio) which broadcast weather and river forecasts. In addition, the National Weather Service can activate the West Virginia Emergency Alert System (EAS) on a Statewide, regional or county basis in order to warn the general public of impending weather-related disasters, as well as other types of emergencies, (i.e., chemical incidents) if requested.
2. The objective of the first phase of Public Warning is to draw the attention of the public to notify them to begin monitoring broadcast media for emergency information. This phase may also direct the public to take immediate protective action if time is of the essence.
3. The objective of the second phase of Public Warning is to provide information to advise the public of an emergency situation including that

information necessary for the public to take protective action against threats to life and property.

B. Primary Agency

1. Emergency Management has the primary responsibility for ordering activation of the Public Warning Plan. However, certain local, state and federal officials are empowered by law to order activation of public warning procedures.
2. Emergency Management may receive warning information from state and federal officials.
3. Initial Public Warning messages should contain general information about the type of threat, **location of the affected area**, and instructions to the public for protective action.
4. After initial public warning implementation, the Emergency Public Information Plan should be activated to update the public on the situation and status of the emergency.

C. Secondary Agency(s)

1. The mission of secondary agencies is to disseminate Public Warning messages.
2. Public Warning messages will be distributed to three distinct groups.
 - a. First responders - They may respond to assist with execution of the Public Warning Plan and/or to assist the public, as needed.
 - b. National Weather Service - Staff will immediately begin dissemination of Public Warning messages.
 - c. Emergency Management personnel - Who may need to assume specialized tasks as a response to the situation. Some of those tasks may include briefing media on the situation, using agency social media, internet, and making contacts with other agencies to communicate the situation and proper actions.
3. 911 Center
 - a. The 911 Center may be the first agency to be aware of an impending or occurring incident.

b. Upon receipt of information regarding an impending emergency incident, the 911 Center will contact Emergency Management who will decide regarding the need for Public Warning.

a. Once a decision has been made to implement Public Warning procedures, the 911 Center will conduct those measures as soon as possible.

4. Ham Radio Operators

Ham radio operators may be utilized by Emergency Management for public communications.

D. Notification Methods – Outgoing

1. Integrated Public Alert & Warning System

The Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) is FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts, to radio and television via the Emergency Alert System, and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio. For additional detail, see the IPAWS 101 Fact Sheet.

2. Digital Receivers

a. Used across the area to alert first responders.

b. Administered by 911 Centers.

3. Outdoor Warning Siren System

a. Consists of outdoor warning sirens located throughout Kanawha and Putnam Counties, with an emphasis on the valley floor that has the greatest population density and proximity to major transportation routes and chemical facilities.

b. Sirens are radio-controlled, activated by emergency personnel pursuant to Federal Emergency Management Agency Regulation Publication CPG 1-17.

c. Some of these sirens are also used to alert volunteer firefighters.

- e. The sirens are primarily used to warn some members of the public who are outdoors. The sirens may not be heard by all members of the population.
- f. Sirens are typically activated for three minutes for test purposes at 1200 hours local time on the fourth Wednesday of every month.

4. Social media

Emergency Management may use agency social media to distribute information.