

**MONTANA
EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS)
STATE PLAN**

July 2008

**EAS OPERATIONAL AREA
INCLUDES ALL OF MONTANA**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This plan was prepared by the Montana State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Emergency Alert System (EAS) sub-committee. It provides specific procedures for the broadcast of warnings and emergency information to the general public throughout Montana, or any portion thereof. This EAS plan may be activated by designated local, state, or federal officials in response to such emergencies as blizzards, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, floods, or civil emergencies like chemical accidents, earthquakes, fires, nuclear attack, or any other events which pose a danger to life or property. This plan supersedes previous EAS Plans implemented by various counties throughout Montana and the State EAS plan enacted in 2005.

Acceptance of/or participation in this plan shall not be deemed as a relinquishment of program control, and shall not be deemed to prohibit a broadcast licensee from exercising independent discretion and responsibility in any given situation. Stations originating EAS emergency communications shall be deemed to have conferred rebroadcast authority. FCC Rules and Regulations provide the concept of the management of each broadcast station to exercise discretion regarding the broadcast of EAS emergency information and instructions to the general public.

1.1. Summary of EAS Activation Process for Non-Weather Related Emergency Messages

- Incident Commander or Designated Official identifies a risk to life or property that warrants immediate notification of the general public.
- Incident Commander or Designated Official creates a message for dissemination (see template in Annex E).
- Message is relayed to appropriate National Weather Service (NWS) office (Annex B).
- NWS authenticates message by calling back and confirming message with dispatch or Designated Official (see Annex A for authentication contact numbers).
- NWS activates EAS by entering message into product with the relevant event code, and broadcasts message over appropriate NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) transmitters.
- Broadcasters receive authenticated message with tones from NWS transmission. These tones trigger EAS decoders at broadcast stations which may be set to broadcast the alerts automatically. NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receivers automatically alarm.

1.2 Summary of EAS Activation Process for Weather Related Emergency Messages

- NWS identifies risk to life and property that justifies immediate notification of the general public.
- NWS issues appropriate warning, activates EAS, and broadcasts message over NOAA Weather Radio.

- Broadcasters receive authenticated message from NWS and automatically broadcast message over radio and television networks. NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receivers automatically alarm.

2. AUTHORITY

Title 47 U.S.C. 151, 154 (i) and (o), 303 (r), 527 (g) and 606; and 47 C.F.R. Part 11, FCC Rules and Regulations, Emergency Alert System (EAS).

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Designated Officials:

The following officials are the only “Designated Officials” who may authenticate activation of the EAS under this plan (phone numbers located in Annex A):

- Incident Commanders through local emergency dispatch (primary means of authentication for local activation is through dispatch)
- County DES Coordinators (secondary means of authentication for local activation)
- Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) for Amber Alerts and Missing Endangered Person Advisories (MEPAs)
- State Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Duty Officer (for statewide EAS activation other than Amber Alerts and MEPAs)
- National Weather Service (NWS) for weather-related events

3.2 Emergency Messages:

- Designated Officials should issue Emergency/EAS Messages when they believe there is a risk to life and property that warrants immediate notification of the general public.
- Emergency Messages are messages that may override all TV and Radio broadcasting and alert/activate NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receivers.
- The list of available non-weather related EAS message headers has been expanded with this revision of the plan to include more descriptive, event-specific message types. See **Annex F** for a list along with their basic definitions.

3.3 Administrative Message (ADR):

- Administrative Messages (ADR) should be used by Designated Officials to provide updated information about an event in progress, an event that has expired or concluded early, pre-event preparation or mitigation activities, post-event recovery operations, or other administrative matters pertaining to the Emergency Alert System.

- The ADR will also be used for Missing Endangered Person Advisories initiated by Montana DOJ.
- Administrative Messages will be sent to TV and Radio stations but should NOT override TV and Radio broadcasting and should NOT activate NOAA weather radios.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. Procedures for Designated Officials

- Designated officials will request activation of the EAS through the National Weather Service (NWS) office that services the impacted county/counties via phone or other available communications. (Annex B lists NWS office areas of responsibility and appropriate phone numbers). A fax with the broadcast information is desirable if possible. If the servicing office for your area cannot be reached, another office may be contacted. Backup capabilities exist between all NWS offices.
- For statewide EAS activation, state DES duty officer will contact the NWS at Great Falls, and they will forward the EAS request to all other NWS offices throughout the state as necessary.
- For Amber Alerts and MEPAs, Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) will be the initiating agency. DOJ will contact NWS Great Falls for statewide or regional activations, and the NWS in Great Falls will enter those alerts. The event codes CAEMT and ADRMT will be used for the Amber Alerts and MEPAs respectively.
- Designated officials will use the following format when contacting the NWS:
 - **“THIS IS (NAME/TITLE) OF (ORGANIZATION). I REQUEST THAT THE EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM BE ACTIVATED FOR (COUNTY(S)) BECAUSE OF (DESCRIPTION OF EMERGENCY).”**
- Designated Officials should provide emergency program material including a description of the emergency, actions being taken by local government, and instructions to the public. **Reference Annex E for sample format.** Total time allotted for the message should be less than two broadcast minutes. Authentication procedures are defined in Section 5.
- Upon authentication, NWS officials will transmit the message provided by designated officials.

4.2. Procedures for the National Weather Service

- The NWS will authenticate all requests for EAS activation according to procedures outlined in Section 5.
- When directed to do so by Designated Officials, the NWS will broadcast EAS coded messages for all the appropriate counties in the operational area and transmit the message

over the NOAA weather radio.

4.3. Procedures for Broadcast and Cable System Personnel

- Upon receipt of a request to activate the local EAS from the NOAA broadcast, the LP-1 (or alternate LP-2) may proceed as follows:

- Broadcast the following announcement:

“WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM BECAUSE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY. IMPORTANT INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW.”

- Transmit the EAS header codes and Attention Signal.

- Transmit the following announcement:

“WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM TO ACTIVATE THE EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM FOR (insert county list or areal description here) BECAUSE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY. IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS WILL FOLLOW.”

Follow with emergency program...should be no more than 2 minutes in length.

- To terminate the EAS message (immediately or later), make the following announcement:

“THIS CONCLUDES EAS PROGRAMMING. ALL BROADCAST STATIONS AND CABLE SYSTEMS MAY NOW RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS.”

- Transmit the EAS End of Message (EOM) code.

Important Note: For State and local emergencies, broadcasters and cable operators have the option of transmitting only the EAS header and EOM codes without the Attention Signal and emergency message. This is acceptable so that EAS coded messages can be quickly relayed through areas unaffected by the emergency.

All other broadcast stations and cable systems that are monitoring their EAS receiver/decoders will be alerted by the header codes and attention signal. Each station and cable system upon receipt of the signal will, at the discretion of management, perform the same procedures listed above by retransmitting the emergency message from the LP-1 or LP-2.

- All broadcast and cable system stations are requested to rebroadcast the following EAS coded messages. For descriptions of message types, see Annex F.

<u>Message Type</u>	<u>EAS PIL's</u>
Child Abduction Emergency (Amber Alert)	CAE
Civil Danger Warning	CDW
Civil Emergency Message	CEM
Earthquake Warning	EQW
Evacuation Immediate	EVI
Fire Warning	FRW
Hazardous Materials Warning	HMW
Law Enforcement Warning	LEW
Local Area Emergency	LAE
911 Telephone Outage Emergency	TOE
Nuclear Power Plant Warning	NUW
Radiological Hazard Warning	RHW
Shelter in Place Warning	SPW
Volcano Warning	VOW
<u>Weather-Related</u>	
Blizzard Warning	BZW
Flash Flood Watch	FFA
Flash Flood Warning	FFW
Severe Thunderstorm Watch	SVA
Severe Thunderstorm Warning	SVR
Tornado Watch	TOA
Tornado Warning	TOR

- To avoid unnecessary escalation of public confusion, all stations and cable systems must be cautious in providing news and information pertaining to the emergency. All messages must be based on definite and confirmed facts. The public must not be left to decide what is or is not fact.
- Upon completion of the above transmission procedures, resume normal programming. Appropriate notations should be made in the station and cable system records. A very brief summary may be sent to the FCC for information purposes only.
- NWS will relay Avalanche Warnings (AVW) from the relevant Avalanche Centers across the region on days of especially high avalanche danger. Normally these will not be sent with tones to activate EAS, but could in certain life-threatening situations (e.g. avalanche threatening a town).

5. BACKUP PROCEDURES IF NWR TRANSMITTERS ARE DOWN

In the event NWR transmitters are not operational, EAS alerts should be relayed by phone from the NWS to the relevant LP1 stations. The LP1 stations will then relay the warning information to those stations that monitor them. The broadcaster should contact the NWS to authenticate such a verbal request by calling the NWS station (Annex B). This additional authentication step is only necessary in this backup situation, when normal dissemination of warnings is prevented by NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) transmitter outage. A list of LP1 stations in Montana is provided in Annex C.

6. AUTHENTICATION

The NWS will verify the authenticity of any EAS activation request initiated outside the NWS, by calling back and receiving confirmation from one of the Designated Officials listed in Annex A. This will normally be the county dispatch or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the county, or the Duty Officer for the State in the case of state-wide activation. Amber Alerts and Missing Endangered Person Advisories will be authenticated through the DOJ help desk. This list of contacts will be kept at the NWS offices, with updates provided to the NWS when available by State DES and DOJ.

Broadcasters who receive the EAS activation signal from the NWR transmission will not need further authorization. However, broadcasters should authenticate any request over the phone (in a situation where NWR transmitters are inoperative) by calling back the NWS at the listed numbers (Annex B).

7. REQUIRED MONTHLY AND WEEKLY TESTS

Required Monthly Test (RMT) of these EAS procedures shall be conducted on a random or scheduled basis by the broadcasters from a point that would originate the common emergency message. Unless a scheduled State test is received from the State Primary, the Local Primary will originate the Required Monthly Test (RMT).

- Routine RMT Schedule:

 Odd months (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept., Nov.) – 8:30 a.m. to sunset.
 Even months (Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct., Dec.) – Sunset to 8:30a.m.
- The test will be scheduled in advance by the LP-1.
- All stations shall schedule Required Weekly Test (RWT). These tests are not forwarded or rebroadcast.

ANNEX A: Contact Numbers for Authentication of EAS Messages (phone numbers kept internal to NWS)

1) Primary Contact Numbers for Authentication:

- PSAP/County Dispatch numbers for local activations
- DOJ Help Desk for all Amber Alert and Missing Endangered Person activations, statewide or regional
- State DES Duty Officer for all other statewide activations

2) DES Directory

- These numbers are a secondary means of authentication and for communication. County coordinators may be part-time and more difficult to reach. Updates to this directory will be provided by State DES.

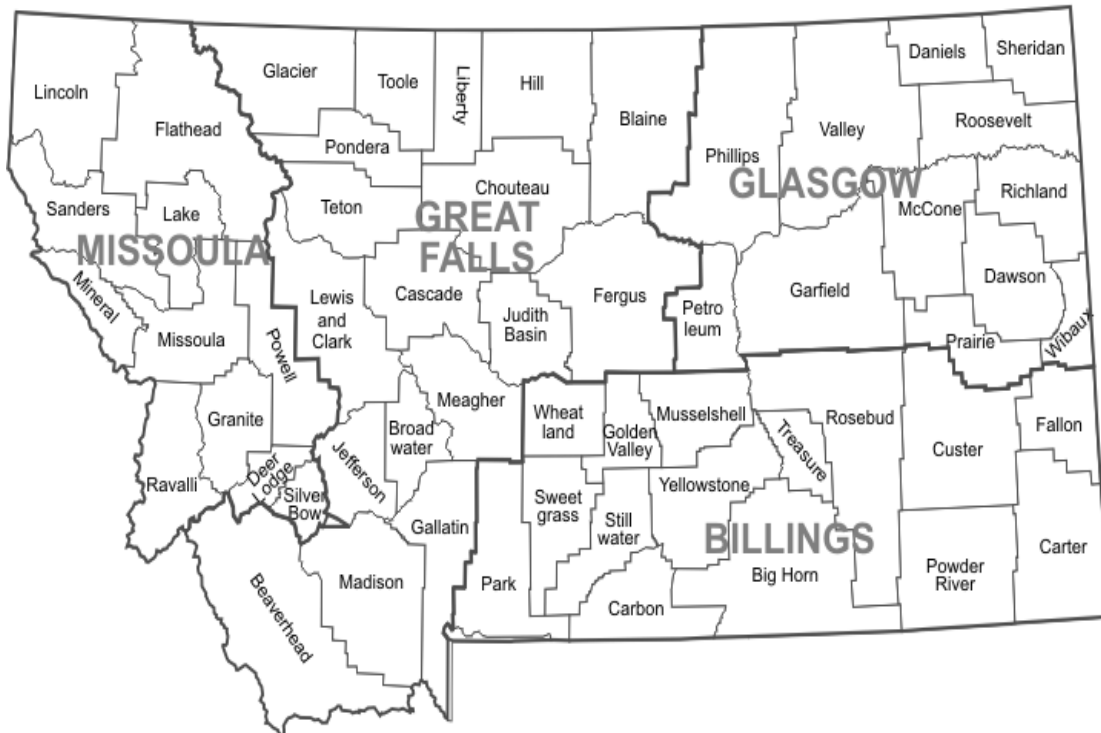
ANNEX B: NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MONTANA OFFICES

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>FAX</u>
Missoula (Backup office is Great Falls): National Weather Service Forecast Office PO BOX 9350 Missoula, MT 59807-9350	1-800-676-6975 (406) 329-4718 (406) 329-4716	(406) 329-4842
Great Falls (Backup office is Missoula): National Weather Service Forecast Office 5324 Tri-Hill Frontage Road Great Falls, MT 59404-4933	(406) 453-9642 (406) 453-8429 1-800-932-6694	(406) 453-3812
Billings (Backup office is Glasgow): National Weather Service Forecast Office 2170 Overland Ave Billings, MT 59102-6455	(406) 652-2314 (406) 652-1916 1-800-240-4506	(406) 652-3214
Glasgow (Backup office is Billings): National Weather Service Forecast Office 101 Airport Road Glasgow, MT 59230-2843	(406) 228-9622 (406) 228-9623 (406) 228-4042 (406) 228-2850	(406)228-9627

NWS Backup Capabilities: All NWS offices have primary and secondary backup capabilities for other NWS offices. If you are unable to contact your primary NWS office, contact the appropriate backup office. If unable to contact the backup office, contact ANY of the NWS offices (starting with Great Falls if possible)-all offices are able to disseminate EAS messages throughout the state. NWAS and CJIN may also be used if the National Weather Service offices are unable to disseminate.

Montana National Weather Service Offices

Areas of Responsibility



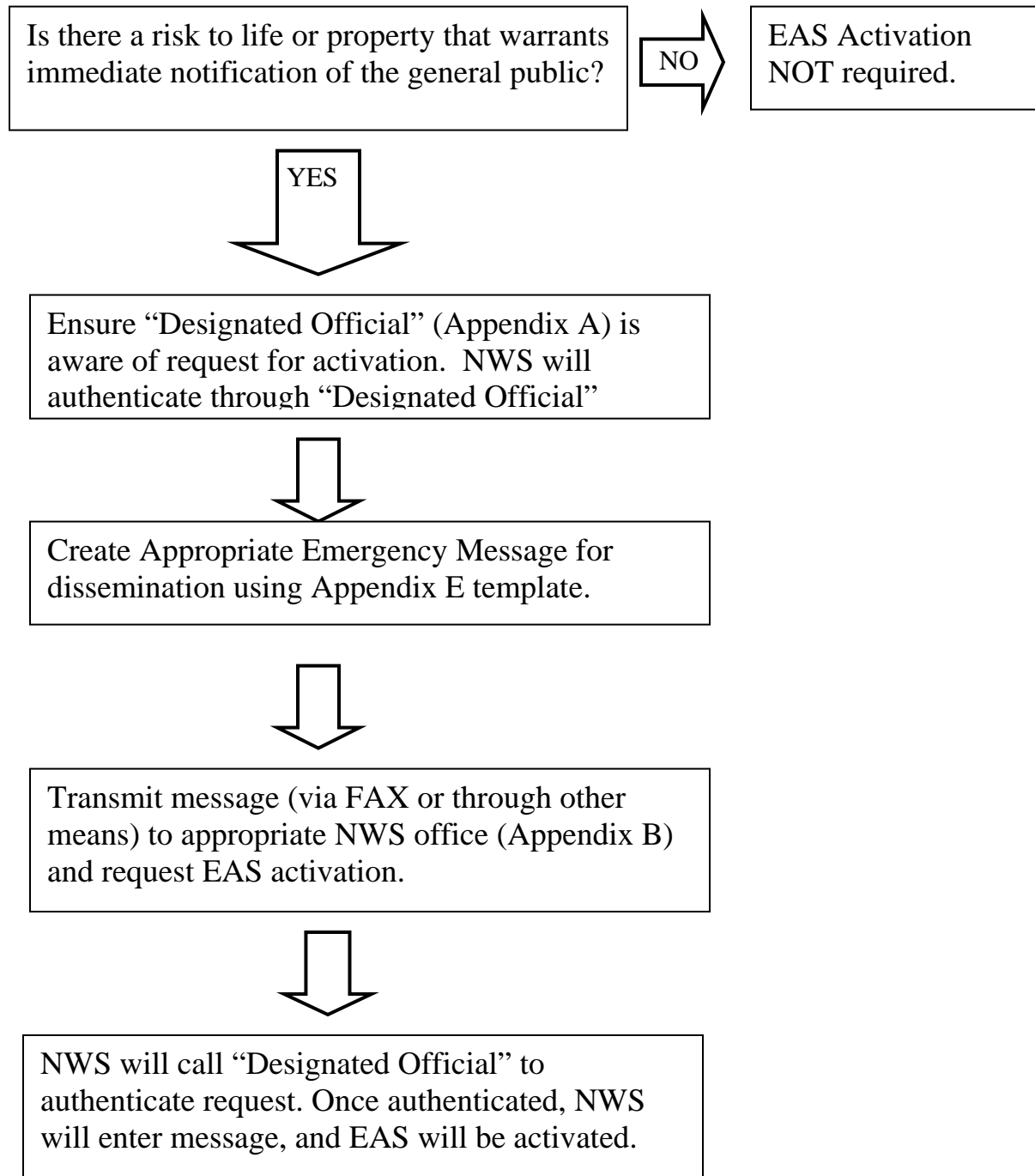
ANNEX C: BROADCAST STATIONS IN THE MONTANA EAS PLAN

For a complete directory of Montana broadcasters see the following website sponsored by the Montana Broadcasters Association: <http://www.mtbroadcasters.org/>

EAS "LP-1" STATION LIST Montana

<i>Call Sign</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Local Area Name</i>	<i>City of License</i>
KMON	560	Cascade	Great Falls
KATL	770	Custer	Miles City
KCGM	95.7	Daniels	Scobey
KFLN	960	Fallon	Baker
KXLO	1230	Fergus	Lewistown
KGEZ	600	Flathead	Kalispell
KGLT	91.9	Gallatin/Park	Bozeman
KPRK	1340	Gallatin/Park	Livingston
KOJM	610	Hill	Havre
KPQX	92.5	Hill	Havre
KMTX	950	Lewis and Clark	Helena
KMTX-FM	105.3	Lewis and Clark	Helena
KLCB	1230	Lincoln	Libby
KGLE	590	Lower Yellowstone River	Glendive
KGGL	93.3	MLRMS	Missoula
KMMR	100.1	Phillips	Malta
KVCK	1450	Roosevelt	Wolf Point
KVCK-FM	92.7	Roosevelt	Wolf Point
KIKC	1250	Rosebud	Forsyth
KATQ	1070	Sheridan	Plentywood
KEMC-FM	91.7	South Central	Billings
KBOW	550	Southwest	Butte
KOPR	94.1	Southwest	Butte
KSEN	1150	Toole	Shelby
KLAN	93.5	Valley	Glasgow
KLTZ	1240	Valley	Glasgow
KEYZ-AM	660	Richland	Williston, ND

**ANNEX D: INCIDENT COMMANDER/DESIGNATED OFFICIAL
DECISION TREE**



ANNEX E: EAS Activation Form for an Emergency Message

This message will override TV and Radio Station Broadcasting. Keep message to no more than 2 minutes of airtime.

Date\Time_____

Person Making Request_____

Agency of Person Making Request_____

Specific Type of Emergency (Hazmat, etc) _____

Affected Counties _____

Specific Affected Area (if available) _____

Duration of Emergency_____

Phone Number to Verify or Contact for More Information_____

Name of Person Completing This Form_____

Exact Message for Broadcast (should include nature of emergency, what area is affected, specific instructions to the public, where to obtain more information, etc.)

ANNEX F: Emergency Message Descriptions

Non-weather Related

Administrative Message (ADR). A non-emergency message that provides updated information about an event in progress, an event that has expired or concluded early, pre-event preparation or mitigation activities, post-event recovery operations, or other administrative matters pertaining to the Emergency Alert System. This message type will also be used for Missing Endangered Person Advisories in Montana.

Avalanche Warning (AVW). A warning of current or imminent avalanche activity when avalanche danger is considered high or extreme. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance when natural or human-triggered avalanches are likely to affect roadways, structures, or backcountry activities.

Child Abduction Emergency (CAE). An emergency message, based on established criteria, about a missing child believed to be abducted. Montana Department of Justice, the state agency investigating the abduction, will describe the missing child, provide a description of the suspect or vehicle, and ask the public to notify the requesting agency if they have any information on the whereabouts of the child or suspect. This message type is used for Amber Alerts in Montana.

Civil Danger Warning (CDW). A warning of an event that presents a danger to a significant civilian population. The CDW, which usually warns of a specific hazard and gives specific protective action, has a higher priority than the Local Area Emergency (LAE). Examples include contaminated water supply and imminent or in-progress military or terrorist attack. Public protective actions could include evacuation, shelter in place, or other actions (such as boiling contaminated water or seeking medical treatment).

Civil Emergency Message (CEM). An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE), but the hazard is less specific than the Civil Danger Warning (CDW). For example, the CEM could be used to describe a change in the Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat.

Earthquake Warning (EQW). A warning of current or imminent earthquake activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.

Evacuation Immediate (EVI). A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local ordinance. As an example, authorized officials may recommend the evacuation of affected areas due to an approaching tropical cyclone. In the event a flammable or explosive gas is released, authorized officials may recommend evacuation of designated areas where casualties or property damage from a vapor cloud explosion or fire may occur.

Fire Warning (FRW). A warning of a spreading wildfire or structural fire that threatens a populated area. Evacuation of areas in the fire's path may be recommended by authorized officials according to state law or local ordinance.

Hazardous Materials Warning (HMW). A warning of the release of a non-radioactive hazardous material (such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent) that may recommend evacuation (for an explosion, fire or oil spill hazard) or shelter in place (for a toxic fume hazard).

Law Enforcement Warning (LEW). A warning of a bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event (e.g. a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate or deny access to affected areas, and arrest violators or suspicious persons.

Local Area Emergency (LAE). An emergency message that defines an event that by itself does not pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials. Examples include: a disruption in water, electric or natural gas service, road closures due to excessive snowfall, or a potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.

911 Telephone Outage Emergency (TOE). An emergency message that defines a local or state 911 telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange. Authorized officials may provide alternative phone numbers in which to reach 911 or dispatch personnel.

Radiological Hazard Warning (RHW). A warning of the loss, discovery, or release of a radiological hazard. Examples include: the theft of a radioactive isotope used for medical, seismic, or other purposes; the discovery of radioactive materials; a transportation (aircraft, truck or rail, etc.) accident which may involve nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, or radioactive wastes. Authorized officials may recommend protective actions to be taken if a radioactive hazard is discovered.

Shelter in Place Warning (SPW). A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place (go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information). An example is the release of hazardous materials where toxic fumes or radioactivity may affect designated areas.

Volcano Warning (VOW). A warning of current or imminent volcanic activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.

Weather Related

Blizzard Warning (BZW). Sustained or frequent gusts of 35 mph or more. Visibility reduced to less than one-quarter mile due to falling and/or blowing snow for 3 hours or more.

Flash Flood Watch (FFA). The possibility exists for meteorological, soil, and/or hydrologic conditions to lead to flash flooding or a dam or levee may fail and threaten lives or property, but the threat is not deemed to be imminent.

Flash Flood Warning (FFW). Flash flood warnings are issued when flooding is imminent. This product will be reserved for those short-term events which require immediate action to protect lives and property, such as dangerous small stream flooding or urban flooding and dam or levee failures.

High Wind Warning (HWW). Sustained winds of 40 mph or higher and/or gusts of 58 mph or greater, expected over the warned area.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch (SVA). Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms with wind gusts equal to or in excess of 58 mph and/or hail size of 3/4 inch (penny) diameter or larger.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning (SVW). Issued when there is radar indication and/or reliable spotter reports of wind gusts equal to or in excess of 50 knots (58 mph) and/or hail size of 3/4 inch (penny) diameter or larger. Warnings imply an imminent threat to life or property.

Tornado Watch (TOA). Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. Tornadoes are possible in the watch area.

Tornado Warning (TOW). Issued when a tornado has been spotted or is indicated by radar. There is an imminent danger to life and property for those in the path of the storm.

ANNEX G: APPROVAL

This Montana EAS Local Plan was developed and approved by:

Administrator, Montana Disaster and Emergency Services

Date

National Weather Service, Meteorologist-in-Charge,
State Liaison Office for Montana (Great Falls)

Date

Montana Broadcasters Association, President

Date

This document on file and maintained by Montana DES.