



FEMA

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leads the federal government's efforts to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

Historically fragmented federal emergency and disaster activities resulted in the creation of FEMA through Executive Order 12127 issued by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, which merged many separate disaster-related responsibilities into a single agency. However, the agency was never officially authorized in statute by Congress.

In March 2003, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, FEMA joined 22 other federal agencies, programs, and offices in becoming the Department of Homeland Security.

The devastating impacts of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 revealed major problems with federal disaster preparedness, response, and relief efforts. In response, Congress established the "Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina," which offered recommendations for improving coordination and addressing the issues exposed by Katrina.

BACKGROUND CONTINUED

On October 4, 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. The act significantly reorganized FEMA and provided it substantial new authority to remedy gaps identified by the Select Committee. FEMA was given a more robust preparedness mission and the clear authority and capability to direct the federal government's disaster response activities.



On January 29, 2013, President Barack Obama signed into law the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act. This bipartisan legislation made important disaster recovery improvements to speed up and streamline Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts and reduce costs. Streamlined procedures and increased flexibility allow applicants to recover in the manner that will best support their community and will also result in saved time that will save money during the recovery from Sandy and in future disasters while strengthening a community's resilience against future events.

The FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2013 builds on the important work of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and Congress and will provide the first ever reauthorization of the agency to ensure continued accountability and strong Congressional oversight. This bipartisan legislation will also improve our Nation's emergency management capabilities, modernize and strengthen critical components of our preparedness and response system, and support emergency response personnel.

Strengthening Accountability and Congressional Oversight

FEMA was created through an Executive Order issued by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. On October 4, 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, which provided the first statutory authorization of FEMA by Congress in the agency's history. The FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2013 continues these efforts, providing the first ever reauthorization of the agency to ensure accountability and strong Congressional oversight. Specifically, the legislation:

- Reauthorizes FEMA through Fiscal Year 2016 consistent with current funding levels.



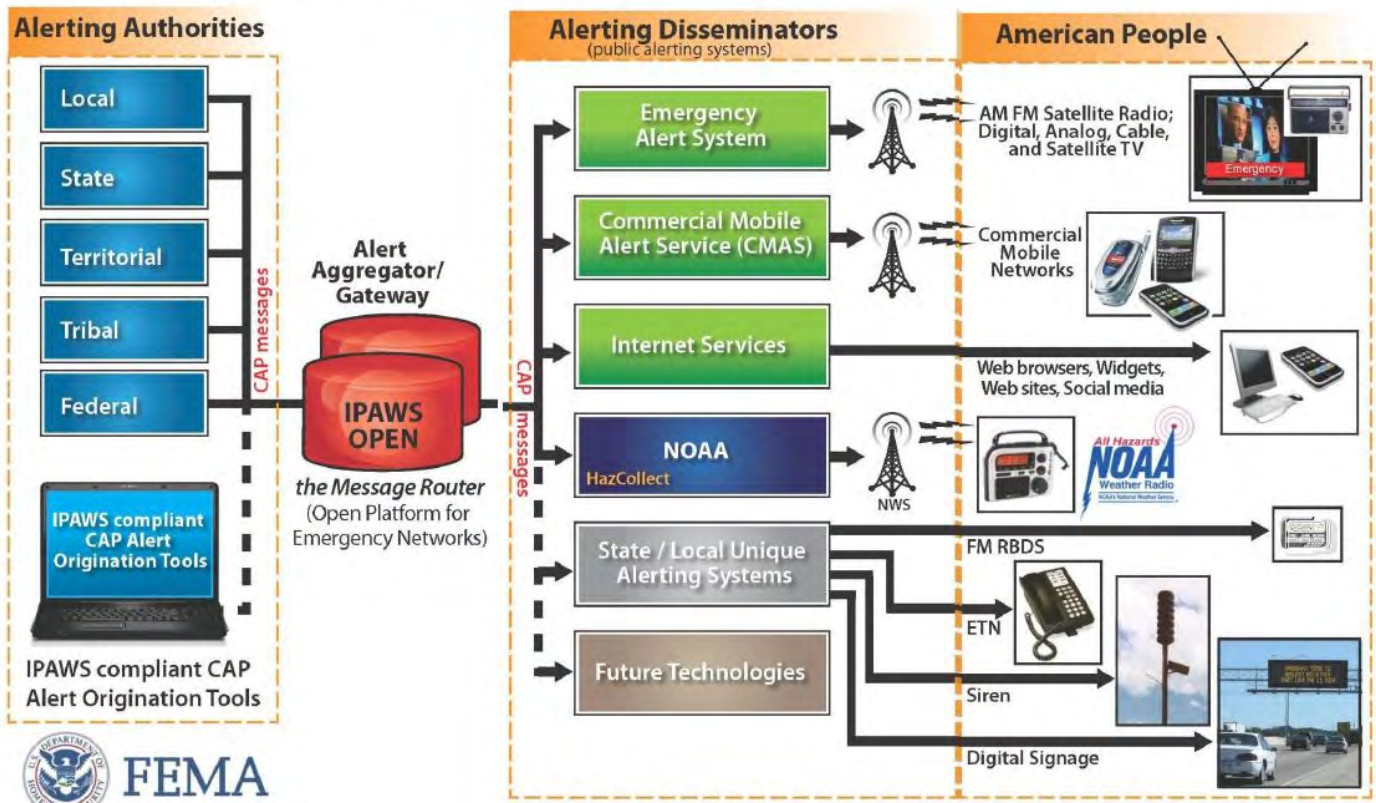
MODERNIZING AND STRENGTHENING OUR NATION'S PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS

As technology changes, it is essential to update our preparedness and response systems for the modern world. The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a “system of systems” that uses different pathways to simultaneously send alerts through many different channels. Established through a June 2006 Executive Order signed by President George W. Bush, IPAWS integrates the nation’s alert and warning infrastructure into one modern network and updates them to take into account newer forms of technology. Doing so increases the capability to alert and warn communities of all hazards impacting public safety. The FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2013 provides the direction and framework necessary to ensure the most efficient development of IPAWS possible. Specifically, the legislation:

- Provides formal Congressional authorization for IPAWS.
- Establishes clear system requirements and capabilities for IPAWS.
- Provides a clear framework for the development of IPAWS.
- Makes certain stakeholders – including federal, state, local, and private sector entities – have input in the ongoing development of IPAWS.

IPAWS Architecture

Standards based alert message protocols, authenticated alert message senders, shared, trusted access & distribution networks, alerts delivered to more public interface devices



SUPPORTING EMERGENCY RESPONSE PERSONNEL

The National Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Response System is a framework for organizing federal, State, and local partner emergency response teams as integrated federal search and rescue task forces. The 28 National USAR Task Forces can be deployed by FEMA to assist state and local governments in rescuing victims of structural collapse incidents or to assist in other search and rescue missions. However, these team members lack the clarity on legal issues that are afforded to other federalized response teams such as the Department of Health and Human Services Disaster Medical Assistance Teams. Specifically, the legislation:

- Clarifies licensing, liability, and compensation issues for USAR participants to ensure emergency response personnel can focus on the mission at hand.



FEMA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

SECTION-BY-SECTION

Title I—REAUTHORIZATION OF FEMA AND MODERNIZATION OF INTEGRATED PUBLIC ALERT AND WARNING SYSTEM

Section 101. Reauthorization of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

This section reauthorizes FEMA through Fiscal Year 2016 at \$972 million each year, consistent with current funding levels.

Section 102. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization.

This section authorizes the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) at \$12 million, consistent with current funding levels. This section would also establish clear system requirements and capabilities of IPAWS; provide a clear framework for the development of IPAWS; and ensure stakeholders, including federal, State, local and private sector entities have a clear method of providing input through a temporary advisory committee.

Title II – STAFFORD ACT AND OTHER PROGRAMS

Section 201. Reauthorization of Urban Search and Rescue Response System.

This section reauthorizes the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Response System at \$35 million through Fiscal Year 2016, consistent with current funding levels. This section also codifies the current USAR Response System in statute and clarifies liabilities and compensation issues related to participants in the System.

Section 202. Reauthorization of Emergency Management Assistance Compact Grants.

This section reauthorizes the Emergency Management Assistance Compacts (EMAC) Grants at \$2 million each year through Fiscal Year 2016, consistent with current funding levels.