

**Date:** Friday, June 05, 2015  
**Subject:** FCC Order Establishes Operational Standards for Emergency Alert System

On June 3, 2015, the FCC released a Sixth Report and Order (EAS Sixth R&O) to improve the operation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and to establish specific operational standards. Among other things, the EAS Sixth R&O creates new minimum accessibility rules to ensure that EAS visual messages are readable and accessible to people with disabilities. Specifically, the new Order requires the following:

First, in addition to requiring that the EAS visual message be displayed in a manner that is consistent with the FCC's current rules (that is, at the top of the TV screen, or where it will not interfere with other visual messages), it requires the message to be displayed in a size, color, contrast, location, and speed that is "readily readable and understandable."

Second, the EAS visual message must be displayed in its entirety at least once during any EAS alert message.

Third, the EAS message may not contain overlapping lines of EAS text, and may not extend beyond the viewable display, except for crawls that intentionally scroll on and off the screen.

The Commission has not adopted rules on audiovisual synchronicity at this time. Audiovisual synchronicity is when messages are displayed with identical information in both audio and text. However, the Commission will revisit the need for such rules if it learns that there are problems with audiovisual synchronicity.

Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology is still maturing, and also will not be mandated at this time, but its use is encouraged.

The Order directs the Public Security and Homeland Security Bureau to collaborate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other relevant EAS stakeholders to host a workshop by September 1, 2015 (three months after the adoption date of the order) to promote accessibility and wider use of EAS.

Paragraphs 34-50 of the EAS Sixth R&O discuss these various accessibility requirements.

Links to the EAS Sixth R&O:

Word: [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-15-60A1.docx](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-15-60A1.docx)

PDF: [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-15-60A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-15-60A1.pdf)

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