

Public Safety Fact Sheet

A publication of the Washington County Anti-Terrorism Advisory Committee

In response to recent world and national events, representatives from police and fire agencies, local governments, health officials and emergency managers within Washington County have increased coordination and communication. The goal of this effort, known as the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Committee (ATAC), is to help ensure an effective countywide response to a major public safety incident. Additionally, ATAC is committed to enhancing public safety by educating the community on topics of public interest and concern through an on-going series of informational fact sheets.

What is the EAS?

*“This is a test of the Emergency Alert System...
.....This only a test.”*

We have all heard that message, accompanied by the attention-getting beeps over our radio and television. Although the interruption of your favorite song or television show may be irritating, the system is designed to help protect you before or during a life-threatening emergency. In Washington County, the EAS may be activated by any fire, law enforcement, emergency management, health department, public works, or elected official managing a major incident. It may only be utilized if all of the following criteria are in place:

- The situation is imminent (time critical).
- The situation poses a threat to life and property.
- The public must be provided with instructions.
- Other warning methods would be ineffective.

Enhancements

The EAS was enhanced in 1997 with digital capabilities. This now allows broadcasters and cable operators to automatically interrupt their scheduled programming. With the proper software, the EAS equipment can also provide warnings in the language normally used by the station or cable system (e.g., *Spanish*). In addition, EAS signals can now also travel over non-broadcast frequencies and telephone lines, including cellular phones, pagers, and other devices.

What Should I Do?

- Prepare yourself and family before an emergency. The two most likely situations that would prompt an EAS activation are **Shelter-in-Place** and **Evacuation**. Would you be ready to take either action?
- Realize the importance of the EAS. Listen closely to EAS messages and, if necessary, take the prescribed safety precautions.

Contacts For More Information:

- Office of Consolidated Emergency Management (*Washington County*):
(503) 649-8577 / www.ocem.org
- Oregon Emergency Management: www.osp.state.or.us/oem/programs/eas/eas.htm

**The Emergency
Alert System (EAS)**
..... instructions for your
safety!

(Topic #5)