

Media Contact:

MediaRelations@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

FCC PAVES WAY FOR MULTILINGUAL WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS

Provides Templates to Enable Public Safety Officials to Send Alerts in Multiple Languages

WASHINGTON, January 8, 2025—Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel today announced a major step forward in expanding multilingual Wireless Emergency Alerts. Based on public feedback, the agency has created templates for the 18 most commonly issued and time-sensitive alerts in the 13 most commonly spoken languages in the U.S., plus English and American Sign Language (ASL). Public safety officials will have the option to use these customizable multilingual template alerts in order to better warn their communities and save lives.

“The language you speak shouldn’t keep you from receiving the information you or your family needs to stay safe. During an emergency, life-saving alerts should be accessible to everyone,” **said Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. “Our public safety partners have made it clear that one of the main barriers to multilingual alerting is the ability to translate time-sensitive messages into additional languages during crises. The multilingual Wireless Emergency Alert templates we announce today are a long-time coming and will make it so officials can reach more people with urgent messages and save lives.”

“FEMA supports the FCC’s effort to improve access to Wireless Emergency Alerts for individuals with limited English proficiency,” **said Michael S. George, Associate Administrator of FEMA’s Office of National Continuity Programs**. “This initiative will help alert originators communicate quickly with the public during critical emergencies.”

At present, mobile devices only support WEA alerts sent in English and Spanish. In addition, alert originators must write any Spanish translations themselves. In October 2023, the Commission adopted rules to enable alert originators to send common alerts in more than a dozen languages without the need for a translator. To achieve this, the rules require wireless providers that participate in WEA to install and store multilingual alert templates, provided by the Commission, on mobile devices. When an alert originator sends a template-based multilingual alert, the phone will display the relevant template in the subscriber’s default language, if available. Otherwise, the phone should display the alert in English.

In February 2024, as directed by the Commission, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau sought comment on implementation details, including which alerts should have multilingual templates and the translations for those templates. Today’s Report and Order from the Bureau incorporates that feedback and presents the templates for the most common and time-sensitive alerts, such as hurricane, tornado, and earthquake warnings, in the 13 most commonly spoken languages in the U.S., in addition to English and ASL: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

For further details on today's action, please see: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-adopts-implementation-requirements-multilingual-wea-templates>.

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / www.fcc.gov

*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*