

CHAPTER 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct mail and/or telephone surveys to ascertain penetration. How many people are aware of the NOAA Weather Radio service, how many are equipped to receive the broadcasts in their homes and offices, and how many possess Weather Radio receivers capable of activating upon tone alert so that citizens can be roused to action if an official warning is issued?
2. Mount an effort to increase the public's awareness of the NOAA Weather Radio service. The federal government should fund renewed public-service announcements describing the broadcasts and the consumer devices that can receive them. Perhaps as importantly, the National Weather Service should, as a matter of policy and normal procedure, contact media representatives in localities affected by weather disasters, and national media following high-profile disasters, to request insertion of government-recommended boilerplate sentences in media coverage for purposes of educating the public about Weather Radio.
3. Federal authorities should press for standardized and formalized agreements between federal, state, and local government entities and the National Weather Service to ensure immediate relay over NOAA Weather Radio of non-weather related messages.

4. Bearing in mind the nation's new Homeland Security emphasis, the Federal Communications Commission should, without delay, amend Emergency Alert System rules to make EAS participation by broadcasters mandatory. The federal government should fund the modest equipment upgrades such a mandate would entail. Absent an assurance that all broadcast stations participate in the EAS, manufacturers of AM/FM radio receivers for home and car are reluctant to bring EAS-decoding equipment to market for reasons of product liability.
5. The federal government should accelerate efforts to develop manufacturing standards and protocols that will empower consumer-electronics makers to bring next-generation dissemination devices to the market, once the liability issue is dispensed with. Manufacturers of television sets, car and home stereos, cellular and wired telephones, wireless pagers, and personal computers, should lobby for a national set of FCC rules that will foster development standards.
6. Consumer-electronics makers should proceed with the development and marketing of devices capable of receiving NOAA and EAS warning alerts. Such devices would represent an unprecedented marketing opportunity.
7. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration should consider hiring a staff historian, lest other stories in our nation's proud weather- and science-services legacy be lost, as this one nearly was.