



**stop
& listen**

**Standard Emergency
Warning Signal**

STANDARD EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNAL Q & A

A **Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)** media information kit, developed by a national inter-agency working group and approved by each state/territory emergency service, has now been distributed to most radio and television stations across Australia. A similar kit has gone to police, SES, fire etc agencies.

1. ***Who will tell us to play the alert signal?***

The Incident Controller authorises use of the SEWS to be played ahead of an emergency alert, warning or public advice or urgent safety message such as an evacuation instruction relating to a major emergency or disaster. SEWS could be issued by the Police or Fire Commissioner, or the State SES Chief (in the case of a tsunami or cyclone); or the Bureau of Meteorology (in the case of a rapid-onset emergency such as a hailstorm or tornado).

2. ***How will I know its official?***

A Request to Broadcast an Emergency Announcement using the Standard Emergency Warning Signal will be sent by email and/or fax to your station. A sample template for this advice is in the SEWS Media Information Kit. The agency issuing the alert will phone your station to verify receipt.

3. ***Will the signal be used for all emergencies?***

No. It will be used very selectively to alert the public to an announcement related directly to a specific emergency, i.e. to draw attention to a following warning or advice about a rapid-onset emergency or disaster, when people are asked to move or evacuate a location, or for a very specific instruction.

4. ***I don't have the signal CD?***

A two-minute long SEWS siren signal is included on the CD in the SEWS Media Information Kit. It can also be accessed by going to www.ema.gov.au and search for SEWS.

You can obtain a replacement kit by emailing publicaffairs@ag.gov.au.

5. ***Does anyone else around here have the signal?***

Most radio and television stations in Australia have been issued with the SEWS Media Information Kit including the signal. Your local emergency service agency (police station, SES headquarters etc) will also have the kit and the SEWS siren signal.

6. ***Are there guidelines about when the signal can be used?***

Yes. There are instructions on the use of SEWS in a booklet included inside the SEWS Media Information Kit.

7. ***How do I get hold of the emergency services in my area to validate the request?***

There is a list of your state emergency service agencies and their contact numbers inside the SEWS Media Information Kit holder.

You are encouraged to contact your local emergency services agencies to ensure they have your station contacts – email address, phone and fax numbers etc.

8. ***How can I tell my listeners about the SEWS signal and what they should do if they hear it?***

There are three Community Service Announcements (CSAs) recorded on the same CD as the SEWS siren signal in the kit. You can play them anytime.

9. ***What does the logo on the kit mean?***

The logo is a simple representation of the siren sound. It can be used by television stations alongside any emergency alert/information crawler issued by an authorised Incident Controller or the Bureau.

10. ***Is there a website with information on?***

Yes. Go to www.ema.gov.au and search for SEWS.

Contact within the federal Attorney-General's Department Public Affairs Branch:
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