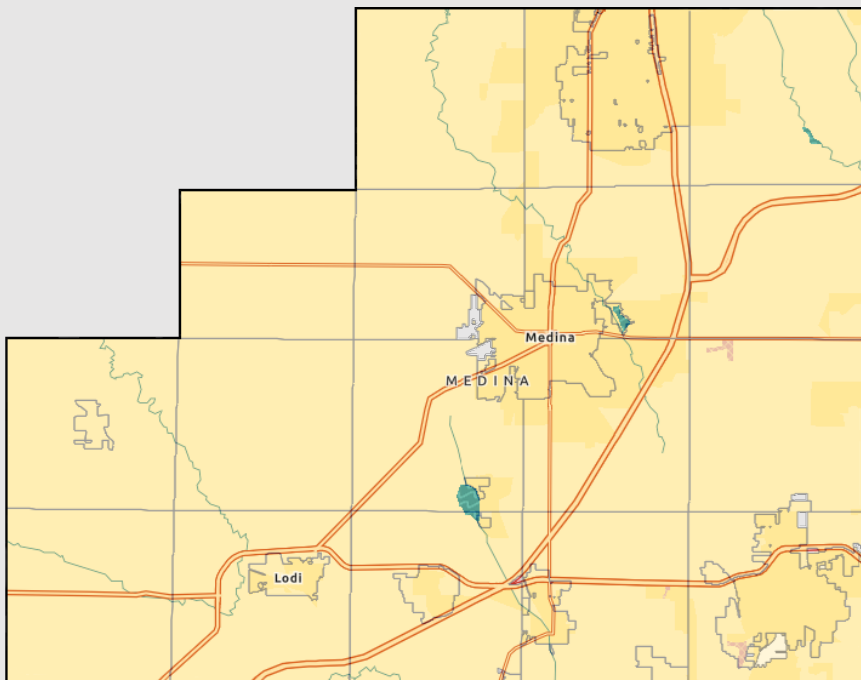


# Mass Notification System Plan



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# CONTENTS


<b>CHAPTER 1. APPROVAL .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2. RECORD OF CHANGES/SCHEDULE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3. PLAN DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE, &amp; SUPERSESSION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
A. Maintenance and Updates .....	5
B. Revision .....	5
<b>CHAPTER 4. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Purpose .....	6
B. Scope .....	6
C. Planning Assumptions .....	6
<b>CHAPTER 5. PLANNING AND RESPONSE PRINCIPLES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
A. Whole Community Integration .....	8
1. Federal Government .....	8
2. State Government .....	8
3. Local Government .....	8
4. Access and Functional Needs .....	8
B. Core Capabilities .....	9
C. Community Lifelines .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 6. ALERT, WARNING, AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
A. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) .....	11
B. Emergency Notification System (ENS) .....	12
C. Notification Types .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 7. IPAWS POLICY AND PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>14</b>
A. Administration and Logistics .....	14
B. System Training .....	14
C. System Testing .....	15
D. Messaging Considerations .....	15
E. IPAWS Formatting Guidance .....	15

## CHAPTER 1. APPROVAL

This Mass Notification System Plan provides the framework for the issuing of emergency alerts, warnings, and notifications utilizing Medina County EMA's Mass Notification System.

This plan was adopted through Resolution 2026-07 by the Medina County EMA Executive Committee.

This plan supersedes all previous versions.



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Ben Nau, Director  
Medina County Emergency Management Agency

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April 15, 2026

Date

**CHAPTER 2. RECORD OF CHANGES/SCHEDULE**

Change Number	Date of Change	Date Approved	Changes Made	Change Made By (Initials)
1	04/23/2026	04/23/2026	Updated event codes to match IPAWS permissions.	JAT

## CHAPTER 3. PLAN DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE, & SUPERSESSION

### *A. Maintenance and Updates*

1. Medina County EMA will review and update this plan following state and federal requirements or if local changes occur. If a department, agency, or other stakeholders in this plan changes, develops or amends any policy, procedure, or operation that will affect the contents of this plan, the entity should notify the Medina County EMA.
2. If a user of this plan identifies a conflict between the plan and how operations are completed during testing, exercises, or responses, they should notify the Medina County EMA promptly.
3. This plan will be updated as soon as practicable upon notification or following periodic reviews. Such changes will be reflected in the Record of Changes.
4. Medina County EMA is responsible for initiating a review of this plan as needed with applicable departments. However, plan updates may occur whenever prompted, if necessary.

### *B. Revision*

1. This Mass Notification System Plan will be revised by the Medina County EMA when updates are identified during plan reviews. Plan updates may be based on changes to policy, county structure, and/or on lessons learned and areas of improvement identified through events, drills, exercises, or after-action reviews. Any changes to this plan will be documented in the Record of Changes table.
2. Applicable agencies will be notified of any changes by Medina County EMA.

## CHAPTER 4. INTRODUCTION

### *A. Purpose*

1. This plan is intended to identify, establish, document, and test the process for disseminating warning information to the public throughout Medina County, and to define and outline the responsibilities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), applicable National Weather Service (NWS) offices, Medina County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), and applicable agencies and jurisdictions within Medina County, as they relate to the operation and utilization of Medina County EMA's mass notification system.
2. In this plan, special attention is given to the use of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and the Medina County EMA's notification system for the dissemination of information for impending natural, technological, or human-caused disasters.

### *B. Scope*

1. The Mass Notification Systems Plan is the strategic emergency operation plan for Medina County EMA specific to the usage and integration of public warning systems throughout the county. The plan identifies the roles and responsibilities of federal and state agencies responsible for maintaining these systems and provides guidance for the usage of the systems. This plan addresses all aspects of warning systems managed or accessed by Medina County EMA, including the (IPAWS).
2. This plan details warning message procedures that are inclusive of the whole community, including those who have functional needs or disabilities.

### *C. Planning Assumptions*

1. National level warnings will be received from FEMA via systems comprising IPAWS or other federal notification systems.
2. IPAWS and its component systems are designed to operate on a 24-hour basis.
3. Telephone and radio systems are used to assist in the dissemination of warnings to the public.
4. This plan outlines the dissemination of warnings to the public
5. Local media and broadcast media are used to assist in the dissemination of warnings to the public.
6. The mass notification system has the ability for residents to sign up for automated weather warnings from the National Weather Service. These messages are automatically sent through the mass notification system with no involvement from EMA based on the warning polygon from the NWS.

7. The use of IPAWS and Medina County's mass notification systems will be required to rapidly disseminate vital information.
8. Medina County's warning systems and procedures exist for the dissemination of public safety notifications throughout the county. Dissemination to the public will occur once Medina County EMA has been notified.
9. As of this plan's promulgation, the city of Brunswick and Brunswick Hills Township have contracted their own mass notification system. Medina County EMA maintains the ability for countywide IPAWS alerting.

## CHAPTER 5. PLANNING AND RESPONSE PRINCIPLES

### A. *Whole Community Integration*

#### 1. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- a. FEMA will ensure the President can communicate to the public under all conditions. IPAWS is the primary method of accomplishing this goal.
- b. FEMA will ensure IPAWS is able to provide timely alert and warning to people affected by threats to public safety in the preservation of life and property.
- c. The different emergency alert systems facilitate readily available and reliable emergency communications with the public. This plan highlights the different systems and roles of the federal agencies responsible for maintaining and operating these systems. The systems afford a communications capability in grave emergencies when national communications resources may have been damaged, and the survival of a community is threatened.

#### 2. STATE GOVERNMENT

- a. Ohio EMA ensures state-level integration with IPAWS is maintained and its components are functioning properly.
- b. Ohio EMA will provide alerting to state agencies and serve as a backup to local alerting entities.

#### 3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- a. Medina County EMA and alerting entities are each responsible for developing procedures for the dissemination of public safety notifications to the public.
- b. Medina County EMA maintains availability of an emergency notification system. Jurisdictions/alerting entities may access this system by following the steps outlined later in this plan.

#### 4. ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS

- a. A critical component of “whole community” is the inclusion of community members with access and functional needs (AFN) and disabilities in planning efforts.
- b. While public alerts and warnings will reach many residents during a public emergency, there are access and functional needs and at-risk populations who are unlikely to receive traditional forms of communications. Medina County EMA will make best efforts to include messaging that includes all segments of the population, including those with access and functional needs, while working within the capabilities of the alerting system.

## B. Core Capabilities

1. This plan directly supports a variety of core capabilities, as identified in the National Preparedness Goal. Sections highlighted gray in the table are applicable to this plan's efforts.

	PREVENTION	PROTECTION	MITIGATION	RESPONSE	RECOVERY
Core Capabilities	Planning				
	Public Information and Warning				
	Operational Coordination				
	Intelligence and Information Sharing		Community Resilience		Infrastructure Systems
	Interdiction and Disruption		Long Term Vulnerability Reduction	Critical Transportation	Economic Recovery
	Screening, Search, and Detection		Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment	Environmental Response / Homeland Security	Health and Social Services
	Forensics and Attribution	Access Control and Identity Verification	Threats and Hazards Identifications	Fatality Management Services	Housing
		Cybersecurity		Fire Management and Suppression	Natural and Cultural Resources
		Physical Protective Measures		Logistics and Supply Chain Management	
		Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities		Mass Care Services	
		Supply Chain Integrity and Security		Mass Search and Rescue Operations	
				On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement	
				Operational Communications	
				Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services	
Situational Assessment					

## C. Community Lifelines

1. Community Lifelines are eight foundational services that must be stabilized to restore a community's functionality after a disaster. The eight Community Lifelines are:
  - a. Safety and Security

- b. Food, Hydration, and Shelter
  - c. Health and Medical
  - d. Energy (Power & Fuel)
  - e. Communications
  - f. Transportation
  - g. Hazardous Materials
  - h. Water Systems
2. Medina County warning systems contribute to the stabilization of the communications lifeline and provide lifesaving awareness to the community.
  3. FEMA defines safety and security lifeline stabilization targets as:

*“Infrastructure owners and operators of broadband internet, cellular and landline telephone networks, (radios/television). These systems encompass diverse modes of delivery, often intertwined but largely operating independently. Services include alerts, warnings, and messages, 911 and dispatch.”*

## CHAPTER 6. ALERT, WARNING, AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

### A. *Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)*

1. IPAWS is FEMA's national system for alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through multiple communications pathways.
2. Systems unified under IPAWS include:
  - a. **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)**
    - 1) A public safety system that allows customers with wireless phones and other enabled mobile devices to receive geographically targeted messages alerting them of imminent threats to safety in the area. WEA enables government officials to target emergency alerts to specific geographic areas through cell towers that broadcast emergency alerts for reception by WEA-enabled mobile devices.
    - 2) Message content for WEAs can be customized, but message limits are constrained to 90 and 360 characters depending on phone type and capability. WEA messages need to be formatted to both 90- and 360-character messages prior to transmitting. Once a message is entered for a WEA alert, the message format will be determined by the assigned values of the common alerting protocol.
    - 3) Medina County EMA may also leverage WEA to deliver important emergency information about other hazardous situations.
  - b. **Emergency Alert System (EAS)**
    - 1) The national public warning system that requires radio and TV broadcasters, cable TV, wireless cable systems, satellite, and wireline operators to provide the President with capability to address the country within 10 minutes during a national emergency.
    - 2) EAS is also used by the National Weather Service (NWS) to relay weather related warnings and Medina County EMA may also leverage EAS to deliver important emergency information about other hazardous situations.
  - c. **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio**
    - 1) NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest NWS office.
    - 2) Can be used by Medina County EMA to disseminate public safety information via radio, increasing the population made aware of critical incidents.

## *B. Emergency Notification System (ENS)*

1. Medina County EMA's method of facilitating dissemination or broadcast of non-IPAWS messages to wide or limited areas within the county.
2. Use of the system is accessible by other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions through coordination with Medina County EMA. However, some system capabilities are reserved for use only by EMA.
3. Medina County EMA's Director retains sole discretion in determining the eligibility of any agency or jurisdiction requesting access to the ENS. If approved and upon completion of the following, other agencies and jurisdictions may access the ENS:
  - a. Complete an MOU with Medina County EMA.
  - b. Submit a list of requested administrators.
  - c. Participate in training on the proper use of the ENS.

## *C. Notification Types*

1. An emergency message is any message pertaining to an emergency, such as alerts, situational updates as a response progresses, all-clear messages announcing an incident's conclusion, and post-incident updates or instructions about recovery actions.
2. Drill and test messages that simulate an emergency for practice and policy compliance reasons also qualify as emergency messages since they verify proper system function.
3. Internal agency alerts that provide county and/or individual jurisdiction employees with information.
4. Examples of emergency notifications include the lists below. These are not exhaustive lists, but are intended to help the message originator determine if a message should be sent via IPAWS or the ENS.
  - a. IPAWS examples
    - 1) Active shooter alerts
    - 2) Missing and endangered person
    - 3) Evacuation directives
    - 4) Shelter-in-place directives
    - 5) 911 system outages

- 6) Pertinent updates during an event when IPAWS was used to notify the public
  - 7) All-clear messages at the end of an event that used IPAWS to notify the public
  - 8) Automatic alerts sourced from NWS
- b. ENS examples
- 1) IPAWS alerts listed in the previous paragraph
  - 2) Hazardous material releases that do not pose immediate life-safety concerns
  - 3) Parking ban announcements in response to imminent weather threats
  - 4) Post-disaster assistance information
  - 5) Post-disaster assistance or relief instructions
  - 6) Critical cybersecurity breach alerts causing significant impact to the public
  - 7) Alerts for time-sensitive, critical operational incidents, e.g. boil water orders, life safety equipment failures, etc.
  - 8) Road closures warning people to avoid the area near an emergency incident
  - 9) Missing persons that do not meet IPAWS alerting requirements, when deemed necessary by law enforcement officials
  - 10) Law enforcement activity where the public should avoid the area
- c. Prohibited non-emergency messages:
- 1) Marketing, employment, political, or similar announcements
  - 2) Forecasts that do not address imminent threats or weather watches
  - 3) Road closures not caused by an emergency incident
  - 4) Government office closures
  - 5) Reminder messages
  - 6) Any automated message activated by an external system other than the NWS

## CHAPTER 7. IPAWS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### *A. Administration and Logistics*

1. Medina County EMA shall maintain an MOU with FEMA establishing the EMA as an IPAWS alerting authority. Due to the requirements set forth in this MOU, only Medina County EMA staff may send IPAWS messages under the authority of that MOU. Any entity seeking authority to send IPAWS messages must obtain their own alerting authority designation from FEMA.
2. Medina County EMA will make the best possible effort to select a mass notification vendor that can have multiple IPAWS certificates configured within the system.
3. IPAWS uses event codes to differentiate between message types, and their availability depends on established IPAWS permissions. These codes, along with other message format information, are detailed later in the plan.

### *B. System Training*

1. IPAWS requires completion of FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) independent study course Integrated Public Alert and Warning System for Alert Originators, IS-247. The goal of IS-247 is to provide authorized public safety officials with:
  - a. Increased awareness of the benefits of using IPAWS for effective alerts and warnings.
  - b. Improved skills to draft more appropriate, effective, and accessible alert and warning messages.
  - c. Increased understanding of the importance of training, testing, and exercising with IPAWS.
  - d. Best practices in the effective use of IPAWS to reach members of the public.
2. FEMA EMI's independent study course Integrated Public Alert and Warning System for Alerting Administrators, IS-251, is optional. The goal of IS-251 is to provide authorized Alerting Administrators guidance with:
  - a. Developing effective policies, plans, and procedures.
  - b. Defining the approval process.
  - c. Defining the importance of training, practice, and exercising with IPAWS.
  - d. Illustrating best practices and effective use of IPAWS to reach members of the public.
3. Medina County EMA's Director, Deputy Director, and Emergency Management Specialist shall complete IS-247 and are highly encouraged to complete IS-251.

4. Medina County EMA may provide training on the use of the EMA's emergency notification system.

### *C. System Testing*

1. IPAWS and the ENS should be tested on a regular basis to ensure functionality and promote proficiency by authorized personnel.
2. The test will include drafting a message, releasing it, and verifying the message was processed. Verifying message processing can be accomplished by using the tool available at <https://messageviewer.demo.apps.fema.gov/>.
3. An after-action review should be conducted after testing and real-world use of IPAWS to continuously improve system and user readiness.

### *D. Messaging Considerations*

1. When determining the type of message to release, keep in mind the following considerations to ensure the broadest audience is reached:
  - a. The time of day a message is sent will have an impact on the number of people who read the information.
  - b. Total calculated recipients via IPAWS, WEA, ENS, etc.
2. Keep in mind that messages that do not provide useful or valuable information may be considered a nuisance by recipients and cause them to unsubscribe.
3. Medina County EMA staff are available to provide guidance and recommendations, if needed.

### *E. IPAWS Formatting Guidance*

1. Geofencing will be used as much as possible to limit the alert to a specific area of concern. This will prevent over alerting and alert fatigue.
2. Alerts are required to have certain values associated with them to help standardize message formats. The values and codes available for selection are broken down in the following sub-paragraphs.
3. Medina County EMA has access to the following Non-Weather Emergency Message (NWEM) event codes:
  - a. Civil Danger Warning (CDW): A warning of an event that presents a danger to a significant civilian population. Examples include contaminated water supply and imminent or in-progress military or terrorist attack. Public protective actions could include evacuation,

shelter in place, or other actions, e.g. boiling contaminated water or seeking medical treatment.

- b. Civil Emergency Message (CEM): An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a lower priority message than CDW due to being less specific in nature. For example, the CEM could be used to describe a change in the Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat.
- c. Immediate Evacuation (EVI): A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local, tribal, or territorial ordinance. As an example, authorized officials may recommend the evacuation of affected areas due to an approaching tropical cyclone. In the event a flammable or explosive gas is released, authorized officials may recommend evacuation of designated areas where casualties or property damage from a vapor cloud explosion or fire may occur.
- d. Hazardous Materials Warning (HMW): A warning of a release of non-radioactive material, such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent, that may recommend evacuation, for an explosion, fire, or oil spill hazard, or shelter in place for a toxic fume hazard.
- e. Local Area Emergency (LAE): An emergency message that defines an event that by itself does not pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials.
- f. Law Enforcement Warning (LAW): A warning of a bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event, e.g. a jailbreak. An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate or deny access to affected areas, and arrest violators or suspicious persons.
- g. Missing and Endangered Persons (MEP):
  - 1. Used to facilitate the more efficient and widespread dissemination of alerts and coordinated responses to incidents involving all missing and endangered persons across a single or multiple jurisdictional area, not currently covered by AMBER alerts. MEP alerts aid in finding a missing and endangered person by notifying the public so they can assist in the search.
  - 2. The MEP event code will not be implemented unless the following criteria are met:
    - a) The local investigating law enforcement agency confirms the individual is missing.
    - b) The individual meets at least one of the following criteria:
      - 1) Is between 18 and 65 years of age,

- 2) Has a mental impairment, or
  - 3) Has either autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability.
- c) The disappearance of the individual poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual.
  - d) There is sufficient descriptive information about the individual and the circumstances surrounding the individual's disappearance to indicate that activation of the alert will help locate the individual.
- h. Required Weekly Test (RWT): A test message that consists, at a minimum, of the header and end-of-message tones. Though an RWT does not need an audio or graphic message announcing the test, many stations provide them as a courtesy to the public. In addition, television stations are not required to transmit a video message for weekly tests. RWTs are scheduled by the station on random days and times during the weeks when there is no Required Monthly Test scheduled. Broadcast and cable operators generally do not relay incoming RWTs. EAS RWTs may be originated by state and local alerting authorities to confirm the operational status of their IPAWS Live alerting software configuration without fear of interruption broadcast or cable programming.
  - i. Shelter In Place Warning (SPW): A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place, i.e. go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information. An example is the release of hazardous materials where toxic fumes or radioactivity may affect designated areas.
  - j. 911 Telephone Outage Emergency (TOE): An emergency message that defines a local or state 911 telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange. Authorized officials may provide alternate phone numbers with which to reach 911 or dispatch personnel.
4. Category: The field denoting the broad type of hazard being detailed in the message.
- a. Geo: Geophysical, including earthquakes
  - b. Met: Meteorological, including flooding
  - c. Safety: General emergency and public safety
  - d. Security: Law enforcement, military, homeland and/or local/private security
  - e. Rescue: Rescue and recovery
  - f. Fire: Fire suppression and rescue
  - g. Health: Medical and public health

- h. Env (Environmental): Pollution and other environmental
  - i. Transportation: Public and private transportation
  - j. Infra (Infrastructure): Utility, telecommunication, and other non-transport infrastructure
  - k. CBRNE: Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High-Yield Explosive threat or attack
  - l. Other events
5. Response type: The field denoting the type of action recommended for the target audience.
- a. Shelter: Take shelter in place or per instructions.
  - b. Evacuate: Relocate as instructed.
  - c. Prepare: Make preparations per instructions.
  - d. Execute: Execute a pre-planned activity.
  - e. Avoid: Avoid the subject area.
  - f. Monitor: Attend to information sources as described in instructions.
  - g. Assess: Evaluate the information in this message. This option should not be used in public warning applications.
  - h. All clear: The subject event no longer poses a threat or concern and any follow-on action as described in instructions.
  - i. None
6. Status: Self-explanatory.
7. Message Type: Self-explanatory.
8. To successfully send an alert, it must contain certain values for the Urgency, Severity, and Certainty fields. Other fields are important too, but their selection does not affect triggering a Wireless Emergency Alert messages transmission. Subsequent paragraphs contain more detailed information on each category and choices available for them.
- a. Urgency: The urgency field indicates how quickly the public should act upon receiving the alert. An urgency level of immediate or expected is required for an alert to transmit successfully over the WEA system. The urgency levels are as follows:

- 1) Immediate: responsive action should be taken immediately.
  - 2) Expected: responsive action should be taken within the next hour.
  - 3) Future: responsive action should be taken soon.
  - 4) Past: responsive action is no longer required.
  - 5) Unknown: the urgency is unknown.
- b. Severity: The severity field indicates the bodily injury risk level associated with the alert. A severity level of extreme or severe is required for an alert to transmit successfully over the WEA system. The severity levels are as follows:
- 1) Extreme: extraordinary threat to life or property.
  - 2) Severe: significant threat to life or property.
  - 3) Moderate: possible threat to life or property.
  - 4) Minor: minimal to no known threat to life or property.
  - 5) Unknown: the severity is unknown.
- a. Certainty: The certainty field informs the public whether the alert is currently occurring or likely to occur in the future. A certainty level of observed or likely is required for an alert to transmit successfully over the WEA system. The certainty levels are as follows:
- 1) Observed: the alert is determined to have occurred or is ongoing.
  - 2) Likely: the probability of the alert occurring is greater than 50%.
  - 3) Possible: the probability of the alert occurring is less than 50%.
  - 4) Unlikely: the probably of the alert occurring is approximately 0%.
  - 5) Unknown: the probability of the alert occurring is unknown.
9. WEA Handling: IPAWS requires a WEA handling code to be selected based on the event type. Most event codes can be Imminent Threat or Public Safety based on the severity of the incident. The selection of a handling code determines how the WEA banner or header appears on cellular devices. Choices are listed below, along with what the message's header or banner will display.

- a. Amber: Restricted to use when event code CAE (Child Abduction Emergency) is selected, which Medina County EMA is unable to use.
- b. Imminent Threat: "Emergency Alert". Imminent Threat must be selected if the event code CDW, CEM, EVI, or SPW are used.
- c. Earthquake: Restricted to use when event code EQW (Earthquake) is selected, which Medina County EMA is unable to use.
- d. Public Safety: Public Safety Alert
- e. WEA Test: WEA Test