

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Captain Jason Berry
Government and Media Relations
(360) 596-4010 – office
(360) 596-4015 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: Nov. 8, 2011
Contact: Mr. Mark Layhew
Phone: (360) 704-2282

NAT'L TEST OF EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM COULD STRESS 9-1-1 SYSTEMS WSP Asks: Please Don't Call 9-1-1 to Ask About Test

(Olympia)—The Washington State Patrol is reminding everyone that tomorrow's national test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) is just that: a test.

This is the first time there has been a nationwide test of EAS, and there is concern that it could trigger calls to 9-1-1 from people unfamiliar with the process.

"We think a national test is a great idea, and probably overdue," said Mark Layhew, director of the State Patrol's Communications Division. "But we don't want people wondering about it and calling 9-1-1 for information."

Layhew stressed that people should only call 9-1-1 when they need police, fire or medical help in response to an incident.

"People should never call 9-1-1 to ask about power outages, road blockages or in this case, tests of a national warning system," Layhew said.

The test will happen tomorrow (Wednesday) at 11:00 a.m. Pacific Standard Time. It will be similar to the regular weekly and monthly tests done by broadcasters, but will originate with the federal government.

During the test, no matter where citizens tune their radio or television (broadcast, cable or satellite), people will hear the same EAS tones and message. The test is anticipated to last about 30 seconds.

No action by citizens is required in response to the test.

State Patrol dispatchers will not spend a lot of time on the phone with callers who are inquiring about the test. They have been instructed to quickly end those calls.

"We never know what the next phone call will bring. It could be a real emergency that needs our attention," Layhew said.

For more information on tomorrow's EAS Test go to:
<http://transition.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/eas.pdf>

###