



Alerts & Warnings Improvement

Austin Emergency Management | October 6, 2026



What is IPAWS

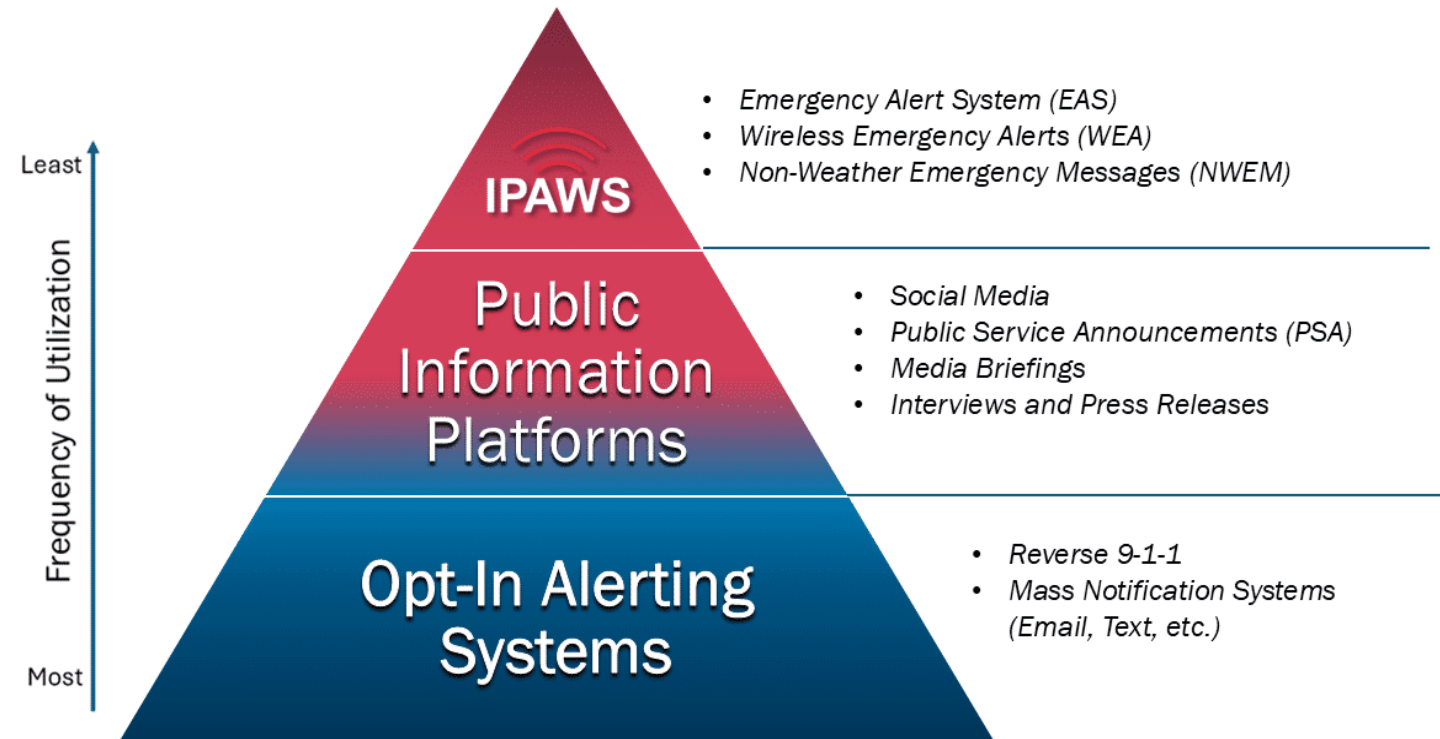
**Warn Central
Texas**

Opt in

IPAWS

WEA:

Geolocated
based on cell
phone towers



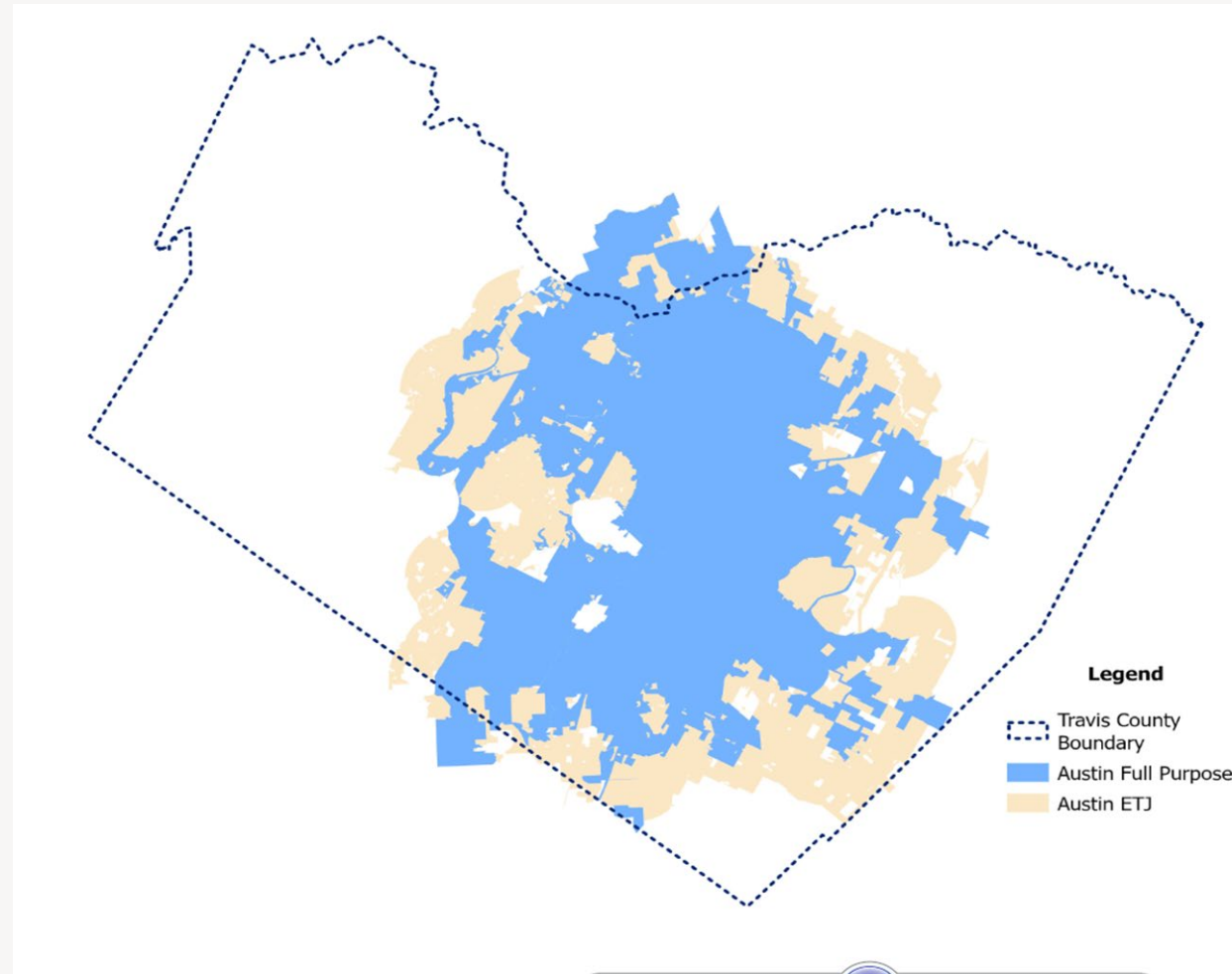
Best Practice: Continue using all lower tools as you move up the pyramid



History & Challenges

- Previously, counties were authorized alerting authorities
- City of Austin has full purpose and ETJ's in Hays, Travis and Williamson counties
 - Hays County boundary 4,414 (.5%)
 - Travis County boundary 897,010 (92%)
 - Williamson County boundary 73,993 (7.5%)

Current COA Jurisdiction – County Overlay



Strengthening Regional Partnerships



- Message Deconfliction and Support
 - Agree to serve as back-ups, share templates
 - MOUs in progress with Williamson, Hayes and Travis Counties

- Coordination with AISD
 - Deconfliction
 - Coordination to incidents at/near AISD facilities
 - Understand language used by AISD
 - APD & AISD PD continue to meet regularly



IPAWS Training for the Region

- Coordination with ATCEMS and AFD
 - Trained AFD & ATCEMS Leadership and Dispatch on IPAWS
 - Developed triggers and templates with AFD for evacuations
- AISD hosted tabletop exercise with AEM, APD
 - Understand response to on-campus incident
 - Understand AISD leadership decisions
 - Understand APD operations when assisting
- Coordination with Law Enforcement
 - Trained APD Dispatch, PIO, & Leadership on IPAWS
 - Trained Travis County Sheriff's Office and TCSO PIO on IPAWS
 - Developed message templates
 - Developed IPAWS system use triggers

IPAWS Training for the Region



- **July 2026:** AEM hosted IPAWS training with FEMA
 - AEM PIOs & Duty Officers
 - Dispatch Supervisors: APD, AFD, ATCEMS, TCSO
- **July 27-28, 2026:** CAPCOG hosted Alerts & Warnings Workshop
 - Led by Dr. Jeannette Sutton & Eddie Bertola
 - Attended by AEM PIOs & 2 APD Dispatch Supervisors
- **July 29, 2026:** AISD hosted APD, AEM tabletop exercise
 - Discussion based
 - Better understanding of operational decisions, actions, public info capabilities/needs for AISD



IPAWS Training for 911 Dispatch



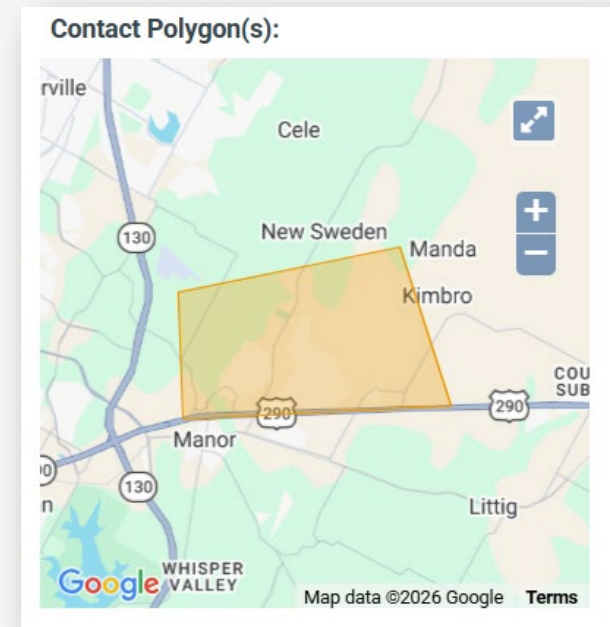
- Trained 57 COA, Travis County, Williamson County staff on IPAWS
- AEM PIOs developed Incident Templates with APD & TCSO PIOs
- Developed System Use Triggers for IPAWS with APD and TCSO
- AEM PIOs developed new messaging template spreadsheet

Communication Tool or Type >>>>	NWS Warning Product	NWS EverBridge/WCT Warning Product	COA WCT Additional Warning Msgs	IPAWS WEA	IPAWS EAS	Who Requests?	Who Sends?
Trigger for Use							
Active Shooter	NO	NO	YES	Yes	Situational	APD	APD
Shelter in Place	NO	NO	YES	Yes	Situational	APD	APD
Immediate Evacuation	NO	NO	YES	Yes	Situational	APD	APD
Missing Person	NO	NO	YES	Situational	Situational	APD	APD
Police Activity Avoid Area	NO	NO	YES	Situational	Situational	APD	APD
Major Car Crash w/ Shutdowns	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	APD, AFD, EMS	APD, AFD, EMS
Incident at Jail	NO	NO	YES	Situational	Unlikely	TCSO	TCSO
Found Child	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	TCSO	TCSO

Austin Uses IPAWS: Testing and Life Safety



- **September 2025:** City of Austin becomes IPAWS Alerting Authority
 - First successful test of IPAWS
- **January 26, 2026:** Issue first IPAWS alert on behalf of Travis County
 - Winter weather hazardous roads message
- **April 2, 2026:** Participated in statewide warning system test directed by TDEM
- **May 17, 2026:** Issue two IPAWS alerts for mobile shooting spree
 - Issued third message on behalf of Travis County OEM





Message Templates – Example

Winter Storm Warning Message Template Example:

- 90-Character IPAWS:
 - City of Austin: WINTER STORM WARNING for the area. Avoid travel. Follow local media.
- 360-Character IPAWS:
 - City of Austin: WINTER STORM WARNING issued for the area may bring heavy snow, sleet, ice, freezing rain. Avoid driving due to hazardous road conditions and traffic delays. Power outages are possible. Monitor local news and [AustinTexas.gov/alerts](https://austintexas.gov/alerts) for updates.
- Warn Central Texas SMS Text 160-Character:
 - City of Austin: Winter Storm Warning. Hazardous travel expected. Stay off roads if possible and protect the Four Ps. [AustinTexas.gov/alerts](https://austintexas.gov/alerts)

Next Steps for IPAWS



- Transition from new program to maintenance and ongoing training
- Finalize SOP documents and SharePoint Training site for Dispatch & Duty Officers
- Annual template review and maintenance with public safety agencies
- Continued monthly system testing
- Continued outreach and education

