



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

EAS Q&A

Understanding the "New EAS"

[September 2010] As we approach the anticipated date of the release by FEMA of the final standards that will drive the CAP version of EAS, a number of questions have arisen over what will be required and when. Jim Gorman of Gorman-Redlich offers some answers.

Barry: Jim, perhaps it would be good to start by covering a few definitions, and then answer some of the questions that many folks are asking. First of all, what is the "New EAS?"

Jim Gorman: The New EAS is just the old EAS with the CAP tacked on.

Barry: And that leads us to defining what is the CAP?

Jim Gorman: CAP means "Common Alerting Protocol." This CAP is a method of sending text messages, using .xml, that goes beyond the existing watch or warning codes in the EAS receivers.

Barry: When will the 180-day Clock start?

Jim Gorman: The FCC will start the clock when FEMA and DHS announce that they have finished all the standing setting and coordination for CAP with the EAS.

THE NEW EAS RECEIVERS

Barry: OK – here is the key question for many stations: Several companies have been showing what they call the next generation of EAS receivers. Will stations have to buy one of these new EAS boxes?

Jim Gorman: No, that will not be necessary for many stations. There already are CAP boxes like the Gorman-Redlich CAP-DEC1 which will receive and decode the CAP messages, transforming them into a format which may be used by existing EAS equipment from any manufacturer, including Gorman-Redlich.



A front and back view of the CAP-DEC1

A CAP converter like this one is all that a radio or TV station will need to add to their current EAS equipment to be in compliance with the FCC/FEMA mandate for EAS participants to use the CAP.

Barry: Are you saying the existing receivers can still be used, and that a CAP converter is all we need?

Jim Gorman: That is correct. The alert codes "pass through" the CAP converter and will then trigger the existing receiver just as normal alerts do now.

Barry: What are the capabilities of the new CAP stuff? What do they add to what we have now?

Jim Gorman: The CAP converter converts the received .xml data into text messages, video streaming, or computer audio, whichever a station needs to bring the information to its listeners/viewers. It will also print alerts to one of the eight USB ports, to a network printer, or send out an email report on alerts if connected to the Internet (it will also update and synchronize the clock via the Internet).

Barry: Doesn't implementing the CAP require additional relays and/or outputs?

Jim Gorman: This will depend upon each station's needs, but normally the same triggers from the existing receiver will be used to trigger the data stream for text, voice, etc.

COUNTING THE COSTS

Barry: What can you tell us about the cost of these new CAP converters?

Jim Gorman: For example, our converter, the CAP-DEC1, is \$1,350 (MSRP) and, as noted, will work with any receiver.

Barry: But what if someone is building a new station now, and needs a complete EAS receiver? If they buy a new receiver, will they have to buy a new one in 180 days?

Jim Gorman: No, if they buy now from most any manufacturer, the newer receivers have CAP built in. Furthermore, if there are any changes from what is now built in, a firmware download should bring the unit up to the latest version.

Barry: What will the new units cost?

Jim Gorman: According to the current information at hand, the range for new EAS (CAP included) receivers is currently in the \$2,300 to \$6,500 range (MSRP).

For more information, you are invited to contact Gorman-Redlich (www.gorman-redlich.com) or your favorite equipment representative (contact information is at: www.theBDR.net/hotlinks/alpha.html). More information on EAS and CAP can be found at www.theBDR.net/articles/fcc/eas.

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