Sage Alerting Systems Rev96 Release Q&A

February 6, 2024

An FCC Report and Order for PS Docket No. 15-94 adopted new rules to improve the clarity and accessibility of Emergency Alert System (EAS). This R&O requires a significant change to EAS procedures, mandating that alerts received via over-the-air EAS data tones be held while the possible presence of a matching IPAWS CAP alert is checked for and then used preferentially. There are also a few other rules requiring changes on how the text for national alerts is constructed. A firmware update will be required to keep the ENDEC in compliance with the Part 11 rules. This update is only needed for ENDECs in the United States. It must be installed by March 11, 2024 (FCC DA 23-1111). The Q&A below will give you the information you need to know.

1.   How do I buy the update?

The update was announced on the Sage web site https://www.sagealertingsystems.com and via an email sent to our support list. The list price is $159, although if your ENDEC was originally purchased new from dealer stock after December 12, 2021 it is eligible for a free Rev 96 update. This includes serial numbers B418750 to B429999.

Contact any of our distributors on the list at https://www.sagealertingsystems.com/Distributors.htm . You will need to provide the serial number of each ENDEC you need to update. Find the serial number by clicking the Version button on the ENDEC's web interface. Look for the line that starts with "SN:" - the rest of that line is the serial number. You may have a different serial number printed on the ENDEC, or on property tags, or in inventory files, but the version the ENDEC uses to validate the software update is the one shown on the version page of the ENDEC's web interface. This serial number is also shown when the ENDEC is rebooted. Restart your ENDEC by pressing the power button on the rear, wait until the display backlight goes out, then push the power button in again. At the ENDEC's from panel, after the boot completes, press the button under the "MSG" text shown on the LCD, then press the far-right button to scroll down to see the serial number.

The serial number is seven characters long - the letter B, followed by six digits. Give all seven characters to your distributor to buy the release. If your ENDEC qualifies for a free update (see below), do not contact your distributor for that ENDEC - you will be able to download the release directly from the Sage web page.

2.   How do I know if an ENDEC qualifies for the free update?

Check the ENDEC's serial number:

- If B418750 through B429999, your ENDEC qualifies for the free update.
- If less than B418750, you must purchase an update though one of our distributors for that ENDEC.
- If from B430000 to B439999, you must purchase an update though one of our distributors for that ENDEC.

3. I've bought the update, or my ENDEC qualifies for a free update. What next?

Orders received by Sage before Friday February 2, 2024 are already available for download.

Orders received by Sage on of after February 5, 2024 will usually be available by 5pm ET on the next business day after we receive the order from your distributor. You must install the update by March 11, 2024. The free update is always available, you do not need to place an order with a distributor for the free update.

To download your Rev 96, access the download page https://www.sagealertingsystems.com/rev96download.html and enter your ENDEC's serial number. The serial number is seven characters long - the letter B, followed by six digits. Type all seven characters into the form on the Sage web site to download the update file.

The download will start after that. You must have purchased the update from one of our distributors, or your serial number must fall in the free update range (B418750 through B429999) to install the update. A purchased update file can only be installed on the ENDEC it was purchased for.

Note: Rev 95 is a prerequisite for Rev 96.

4. How do I install the update?

You will use the same techniques that you have always used to install updates. The update file is downloaded from a web site and stored on your PC. You then upload the file to the ENDEC using the Upload Firmware page of the ENDEC's web interface.

Complete details are in release notes that will be available along with the update file on our web page.

5. If I don't install the update, what happens?

All EAS participants are required to follow the new FCC CAP Prioritization rules (47 CFR 11.55(c)(2), and changes to the text of national messages (47 CFR 11.51(d)(3)). To stay compliant with FCC rules, you must install the update by March 11, 2024.

FEMA CAP digital certificates used to verify CAP alerts are expiring in April. If you don't install Rev96, you will stop receiving CAP messages in April.

6. What does this release contain?

1) Support for FCC Cap Prioritization rules.

2) New CAP verification certificates, released by FEMA in January 2024. They replace two certificates that expire in April 14 and April 28, and add support for a new cert chain that FEMA will start issuing on April 1. To continue to receive all FEMA CAP messages, you should install no later than April 1.

3) An update to root certificates, used to verify HTTPS web sites that CAP alerts and audio files are fetched from.

4) The FCC has released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking highlighting the need for increased attention to security by EAS participants. While specific rules may or may not result from NPRM, it contains several suggestions on improvements EAS participants can make. Sage is adding or extending several features, such as login/logout and rejected login audit logs. We are also adding additional emailed logs in this release, sending weekly log summaries and emailing the existing conformance log. We hope that these changes will help make users more secure, and will reduce the amount of time the broadcaster's staff spends on acquiring the logs for review. There will also be several usability features in this release, detailed in the release notes.

5) Web browsers such as Chrome and Edge now deactivate web pages that are hidden, to save memory and laptop power. We've improved how our web interface reacts to that. The release notes will tell you how ask your browser not to discard or sleep the ENDEC home page if you want to actively monitor your ENDEC all the time to use the popup feature.

7. Future Updates?

We have a list of additional usability features that we hope to include in a free update later this year.