



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Tuesday, May 17, 2022**

**EL PASO-TELLER COUNTY 9-1-1 AUTHORITY INVESTIGATING WHY EVACUATION ORDERS REACHED OUTSIDE IMPACTED AREAS ON MAY 12, 2022**

The El Paso-Teller County 9-1-1 Authority (Authority) identified three issues with the evacuation orders sent on Thursday, May 12, 2022:

1. The alert reached outside the impacted area
2. The link in the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) did not display a map of the affected area
3. The location information contained in the alerts about the fires could be improved upon

Public safety agencies in El Paso and Teller Counties sent four evacuation orders using Peak Alerts and the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for four separate fire incidents to notify residents impacted by fires on May 12, 2022.

Public safety officials use Peak Alerts as the primary means to send targeted notifications to an area impacted by an emergency. Peak Alerts sends alerts by phone call, text message, email, and the Everbridge App. Citizens must opt-in to receive these notifications at [peakalerts.org](https://peakalerts.org).

Public safety officials in El Paso and Teller County can utilize IPAWS to broaden the reach within the impacted area by disseminating messages via television broadcast, radio broadcast, NOAA weather radios, and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). Public safety agencies used IPAWS to send additional alerts on May 12, 2022.

Wireless Emergency Alerts send short messages accompanied by a vibration and alert tone to WEA-Enabled cell phones in a locally targeted area without downloading an app or subscribing to a service. Utilizing these notifications ensures people in harm's way receive the alert, specifically tourists, people traveling through the impacted area during their daily commute, and those who are not registered to receive Peak Alerts. Ideally, Wireless Emergency Alerts notify

citizens in the impacted area with no more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile (528 feet) overshoot. The WEA, specifically for the Summer Grace Street/Akerman Road, is the notification that reached outside of the impacted area.

El Paso and Teller Counties Public Safety Agencies do not send countywide alerts using Peak Alerts. Message senders use a map and selection tool to select the area to notify. The Authority understands that the Summer Grace Street/Akerman Road alert may have alarmed citizens in the community. The Authority is working with Everbridge (software used to send Peak Alerts) and FEMA to determine why the Wireless Emergency Alert reached farther than intended and why the link in the WEA did not display a map of the affected area.