DIRS: IS YOUR STATION REGISTERED?

The FCC recently launched a new program called DIRS, the Disaster Information Reporting System. DIRS has been created to allow communications companies to report the status and needs of their operations to the FCC during times of crisis. All broadcasters and cable operators should register on the DIRS website now. During a disaster, you will be contacted by the FCC if DIRS is activated in your area. At that point, stations and cable operators will be requested to report their on-air/off-air status on a daily basis as well as any needs they may have. Gary Timm, Chair of the Wisconsin State Emergency Communications Committee, has prepared some very valuable information on the program.

We had been waiting for the FCC to correct some errors and omissions in their User Manual, but it appears those corrections will not be made any time soon. In order to have the correct information, please access this link, http://www.sbe24.org/eas/dirs.asp on the Wisconsin EAS website. There you will find a two-page Guidance Document, which will aid you in registering on the site and will outline the shortcomings of the current FCC User Manual.

If you have previously registered on the Beta version of DIRS, you will need to access the new, final Production version of the site to obtain a new password. Note that it is critically important that you now access only the new Production site at https://www.fcc.gov/nors/disaster/ , not the original Beta site.

Being Prepared to File DIRS Broadcast Disaster Reports: When the time comes to fill out a Broadcast Disaster Report, users will need their FCC Facility ID number and their transmitter site coordinates expressed in decimal form. Coordinators and chief operators in particular might want to gather these details ahead of time for all facilities in their company. To convert minutes/seconds coordinates to decimal coordinates, use the FCC site: http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/bickel/DDDMMSS-decimal.html