

The FCC is investigating yesterday's false emergency alert that terrified Hawaii

Following yesterday's terrifying false alarm that a missile was on its way to Hawaii, the FCC announced that it is investigating the incident, and says that Hawaiian authorities "did not have reasonable safeguards or process controls in place to prevent the transmission of a false alert."

In a statement, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai says that the false alarm and the delay in a public retraction was "absolutely unacceptable," and that it undermines "public confidence in the alerting system and thus reduce their effectiveness during real emergencies." He also notes that his office is currently in contact with local, state, and federal authorities to determine just how the alert went out. He called on officials at all levels of government to identify and eliminate similar vulnerabilities.

Yesterday morning, Hawaiian residents woke to an emergency alert broadcast to phones, radios, and television, saying that a missile was inbound, and that they should take immediate shelter. Residents took heed of the warning, and while officials such as US Representative Tulsi Gabbard quickly spread the word that the alert was a false alarm, it took nearly 40 minutes for authorities to issue a retraction through the system.

The Hawaiian Emergency Management Agency has since determined that the alert was sent out in error during a shift change, and has announced that it has implemented some safeguards to prevent a similar incident from occurring.

<https://www.theverge.com/2018/1/14/16890682/fcc-investigation-hawaii-missile-false-emergency-alert>