COMMS WATCH

Communications Infrastructure • Spectrum • Electronic Warfare • Public Safety Comms

Vol. 1, Issue 4 | Week of 16 May 2026 | Fortune Favors the Prepared

⚠ PREPAREDNESS CONDITION: PREP-CON 3 — ELEVATED
Op Epic Fury declared over 05-MAY (Rubio) • Iran Hormuz blockade sustained (Day 78) • GNSS denial footprint sustained (see SAT-002) • Elevated CI cyber threat posture (AA26-097A Day 39, escalating retaliation profile) • PREP-CON 3 sustained on ceasefire fragility.

COMMUNICATIONS CONDITION: COMCON 4 — PARTIALLY DEGRADED (CONUS)
AA26-097A Day 39 Iranian APT on Rockwell PLCs • 1,735+ GNSS interference events Hormuz/Gulf since 28-FEB sustained • FCC commercial SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile 11-MAY (positive turn) • BB8/9/10 launch mid-JUN on Falcon 9 • G2 geomagnetic storm 15-17 MAY (Kp 6 forecast) degrading HF.

Publication Date	16 May 2026
Reporting Period	25 April — 16 May 2026
PREP-CON Assessment	PREP-CON 3 — ELEVATED (Brown)
COMCON Assessment	COMCON 4 — Partially Degraded (AA26-097A active Day 39, Hormuz GNSS jamming sustained, G2 storm 15-17 MAY degrading HF, AST SpaceMobile FCC SCS authorization granted 11-MAY, CVE-2026-20182 Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN CVSS 10.0 due 17-MAY).
Solar Flux (SFI)	declining-to-moderate (SWPC latest; consult product) | Kp Index: 6 (G2 STORM ACTIVE) 15-17 MAY — large coronal hole CH HSS effects, aurora alerts low- to mid-latitudes | SWPC Outlook: G2 (moderate) geomagnetic storm 15-17 MAY driven by large coronal hole HSS. Kp peaks 6 (G2 Moderate) Friday-Sunday. R1 minor radio blackout impacts probable. HF degradation through weekend: polar paths CLOSED, mid-latitude HF FAIR-to-POOR Saturday-Sunday, recovery expected early next week. VHF/UHF and satellite backup recommended for any EMCOMM activations Sat-Sun. Aurora possible mid-US latitudes.
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INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS | AT A GLANCE

Click any ID or system name to jump to the full entry. Footer-level systems (TERR-002, SAT-003, PS-002) have no standalone entry this cycle and are tracked here only.

ID	SYSTEM	STATUS	CYCLE NOTE
SAT-001	Starlink — Theater Degradation	AMBER	Sustained theater degradation (Iran/Ukraine). CONUS nominal. 10,296+ sats operational.
SAT-002	GPS / GNSS — Hormuz	RED	1,735+ events since 28-FEB. Crews navigating on radar only. Sustained post-Epic Fury.
SAT-003	DirecTV / DISH / EchoStar / SiriusXM	GREEN	Subscriber service nominal. EchoStar S-band thread tracked in REG-002.
SAT-004	Cell-Satellite Integration (DTC)	GREEN	POSITIVE REVERSAL. FCC commercial SCS auth 11-MAY. BB8/9/10 launch mid-June.

ID	SYSTEM	STATUS	CYCLE NOTE
SAT-005	AMSAT / Amateur Satellite	GREEN	Hamvention 15-17 MAY in progress. ISS crossband active. FO-29 returning ~20-MAY.
NET-003	Submarine Cables — Gulf Corridor	AMBER	2Africa, SeaMeWe-6 Gulf installs delayed (TeleGeography 04-MAY).
TERR-001	FirstNet / AT&T	GREEN	Network nominal. Satellite layer materially de-risked by 11-MAY FCC SCS auth.
TERR-002	Backbone / BGP	GREEN	NSTR this cycle. 14-JAN-2026 Verizon outage still under FCC inquiry.
EW-001	Iranian EW Posture (PRIMARY)	RED	GPS denial + SATCOM jamming sustained post-Epic Fury. Drives SAT-001, SAT-002, NET-003.
PS-001	9-1-1 / PSAP Infrastructure	GREEN	Nominal nationally. NG911 reliability FNPRM finalization expected late summer.
PS-002	FCC Enforcement — Pittsburgh	AMBER	KD3ASC NOV + Allegheny EMS interference investigation both still open. No disposition.
REG-001	FCC Enforcement Authority	GREEN	SCOTUS argument 21-APR signals court skeptical of limiting FCC. Decision by end of June.
REG-002	FCC Space & Spectrum	GREEN	AST SpaceMobile SCS auth granted 11-MAY. Space Modernization NPRM advancing.
IPAWS-001	IPAWS / EAS / WEA	GREEN	Fully operational. FCC modernization NPRM in deliberation; rules expected mid-2026.

Legend: **GREEN** = nominal, no cycle-level concern • **AMBER** = elevated, sustained threat or unresolved structural issue • **RED** = degraded, active service-affecting condition this cycle.

SECTION 1 | COMMS WATCH BRIEF

Five converging storylines define the communications environment this cycle.

First — Operation Epic Fury declared over 05-MAY, but Hormuz remains effectively closed. Secretary Rubio announced 05-MAY at the White House that Operation Epic Fury, the roughly two-month US-Israel military campaign that began 28-FEB, had ended; the posture has shifted to defensive, focused on restoring Hormuz transit. The naval blockade of Iranian ports continues; Iran continues to control and toll Hormuz transit, with IRGC threatening "decisive action" against non-coordinated vessels. The US announced "Project Freedom" to escort shipping, then paused it citing Pakistan-brokered talks. Net effect for the communications environment: combat-tempo electronic warfare ostensibly recedes, but Hormuz GNSS denial, regional cyber retaliation, and ceasefire-fragility risks persist. Practitioner posture: PREP-CON 3 sustained on ceasefire fragility, not relaxed.

Second — the direct-to-device narrative reversed positively. On 11-MAY, the FCC granted AST SpaceMobile commercial Supplemental Coverage from Space (SCS) authorization to operate up to 248 satellites using 700/800 MHz lowband spectrum in coordination with AT&T, Verizon, and FirstNet. In its 11-MAY Q1 2026 earnings release, AST confirmed BlueBird 8, 9, and 10 will launch in mid-June on a Falcon 9, with phased arrays completed through BlueBird 28 and 45 satellites targeted in orbit by end of 2026. This is the most consequential positive update to the FirstNet satellite path since the 19-APR BlueBird 7 loss. T-Mobile's Starlink-backed T-Satellite remains operational with the constellation now exceeding 10,290 satellites and approximately 650 direct-to-cell satellites in LEO.

Third — CISA KEV cadence intensified, and the deadline structure may shorten. Five new KEV additions this cycle: CVE-2026-20182 Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN Controller authentication bypass (CVSS 10.0, added 14-MAY, due 17-MAY); CVE-2024-1708 ConnectWise ScreenConnect path traversal and CVE-2026-32202 Microsoft Windows protection mechanism failure (both added 28-APR); CVE-2026-31431 Linux Kernel resource transfer (added 01-MAY); and four SimpleHelp/Samsung MagicINFO/D-Link CVEs (added 18-APR, due 08-MAY). Reuters reported 02-MAY that Acting CISA Director Anderson and National Cyber Director Cairncross are evaluating shortening the standard FCEB KEV deadline from two-to-three weeks to three days — a fundamental change in remediation tempo if adopted. AA26-097A Iranian APT exploitation of Rockwell/Allen-Bradley PLCs is at Day 39 and active across water, energy, and government facility sectors.

Fourth — submarine-cable build-out in the Gulf has slipped, with strategic implications. TeleGeography's 04-MAY report (NET-003 this cycle) confirms that the Iran war has delayed Gulf-segment installation of 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 cable systems, with timelines now uncertain. Approximately 18% of global data traffic between Asia, Africa, and Europe transits 17 Red Sea cables; previous Red Sea cable repairs have taken up to six months. Operators are accelerating bypass-route investment. Gulf AI/cloud capacity ambitions are now structurally exposed to the war's tail.

Fifth — a G2 (Moderate) geomagnetic storm is in progress 15-17 MAY. A large geoeffective coronal hole has rotated into a CONUS-facing position; the resulting coronal-hole high-speed stream (CH HSS) drove G1 conditions Thursday and is producing G2 storming through the weekend with Kp peaking at 6. Practical impact: polar HF paths CLOSED through Sunday; mid-latitude HF FAIR-to-POOR; VHF/UHF and satellite are the resilient bearers this weekend. ARES/RACES and any EMCOMM activations should plan 40m/60m as the primary HF bands with VHF/UHF satellite backup. Recovery expected early next week. Aurora possible at mid-US latitudes Saturday and Sunday nights.

No major backbone or BGP routing events identified this reporting window. Backbone NSTR.

SECTION 2 | PROPAGATION CONDITIONS

Solar Flux Index (SFI): declining to moderate | **Kp Index:** 6 (G2 STORM ACTIVE) 15-17 MAY | **SWPC 3-Day Outlook:** G2 (Moderate) geomagnetic storm in progress driven by large geoeffective coronal hole HSS. Kp peaks at 6 Fri-Sun. R1 minor radio blackout impacts probable. HF degraded across all polar and trans-polar paths through Sunday; mid-latitude HF FAIR-to-POOR. Recovery expected early next week.

BAND	STATUS	CONDITIONS
80m / 75m	FAIR	Regional NVIS degraded but useable. Kp 5-6 G2 conditions reducing nighttime range and increasing noise floor. Primary ARES/RACES net band remains operational for short-haul (under 300mi). Operators should expect QSB and weaker copy on circuits beyond 500 miles through Sunday.
60m	FAIR	EMCOMM channel 5330.5 kHz USB useable but with degradation. Less impacted than higher bands. Recommended pre-position for short-haul state and regional EMCOMM through the weekend.
40m	FAIR	RECOMMENDED primary EMCOMM band this weekend, but with reduced reliability. 200-700 mile NVIS paths most reliable; longer skip degraded. Expect signal absorption peaks during Kp 6 windows.
20m	POOR	DX and cross-country paths SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADED through Sunday. Increased absorption and noise. Not recommended as primary EMCOMM band until Kp recovers to 4 or below.
17m	POOR	Strongly suppressed during G2 storm. Limited DX viability. Not for EMCOMM this cycle.
15m	POOR	Daytime DX severely degraded. Not viable as primary EMCOMM. Watch Kp recovery early next week for return to FAIR.
10m	POOR	Below threshold. Sporadic-E may produce isolated openings but not plannable. Plan around 40m/60m primary.
⚠ POLAR / TRANS-POLAR (all bands) — CLOSED: CLOSED through Sunday minimum. G2 storm with Kp 6 produces ionospheric absorption across polar cap. Any polar-path-dependent EMCOMM — Arctic operations, trans-polar Pacific circuits, high-latitude SATCOM — should use VHF/UHF satellite or L-band MSS until at least Monday. Monitor SWPC for recovery window.		

Operational implication: This is a degraded-HF weekend. ARES/RACES net controllers should expect higher missed-check-in rates and weaker copy on circuits beyond 500 miles. For any severe-weather activation or planned exercise this weekend, plan VHF/UHF and DMR (Pennsylvania TG 31420) as primary, with 40m/60m HF as secondary for short-haul regional. Winlink digital traffic over HF will see slower throughput and more retries; Telnet/VARA-FM peer-to-peer is the resilient backup. T-Satellite, Verizon Skylo, and Iridium-class L-band MSS remain available and are not affected by ionospheric storming. Recovery to GOOD HF conditions expected early to mid next week.

SAT-001	Starlink Service Degradation — Middle East / Eastern Ukraine Theaters	CONTINUED
TRACK	SATELLITE COMMS / ELECTRONIC WARFARE	
SUMMARY	Starlink terminals in conflict-adjacent zones (Iraq, Syria, occupied eastern Ukraine, Iranian-controlled Hormuz littoral) continue reporting intermittent to sustained service disruption. No constellation-level failures identified this cycle; no new SpaceX status announcements specific to theater degradation. OSINT attribution remains stable: Iranian-supplied EW assets (Samen-1 GPS jammers, Mersad-family SATCOM jamming) in Iraq/Syria; Russian Krasukha-4/Tirada-2 systems in eastern Ukraine. SpaceX firmware hardening has reduced but not eliminated vulnerability windows. Iranian shut-downs of Starlink connectivity inside Iran during the 2025-2026 protests remain a confirmed pattern of state-driven RF denial. CONSTELLATION STATUS THIS CYCLE: Starlink now exceeds 10,296 active satellites in LEO (Jonathan McDowell, 05-MAY). More than 650 direct-to-cell satellites remain in orbit. Launch cadence sustained at multiple Falcon 9 missions per week. Iran-EW posture overall: see EW-001 (primary). Commercial maritime and NGO users in affected Middle East / Ukraine zones should continue to treat Starlink as a degraded primary, not a reliable backup. Cross-reference: SAT-004 for direct-to-cell race; REG-002 for FCC Gen2 grant status.	
WHY THIS MATTERS	Starlink is the de facto primary connectivity layer for journalists, NGOs, maritime operators, and tactical formations across the Middle East and Ukraine corridors. A degraded Starlink in theater means more fallback traffic onto Inmarsat/Iridium L-band and onto Iranian-controlled cellular — a measurable shift in adversary visibility into operator communications. CONUS impact remains negligible; this is a theater-specific degradation, not a domestic resilience issue.	
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	Pattern remains consistent with targeted uplink jamming rather than constellation-level failure. Disruption probability remains HIGH for the duration of the post-Epic Fury blockade environment (see EW-001). V1/V2 constellation (theater-relevant) is separate from V3 architecture (mid-2027 target using S-band spectrum, see SAT-004). Commercial users should plan Starlink as one layer in a multi-bearer strategy, with L-band MSS (Inmarsat / Iridium) as EW-resilient backup for safety-of-life traffic.	

ALT HYP

AH-SAT-001: Theater degradation is upstream / constellation-side rather than RF jamming [Unlikely]

It is unlikely that the sustained theater-specific degradation reflects an upstream Starlink network or constellation issue rather than targeted RF interference. If true, this would imply CONUS users should also expect intermittent degradation, and the multi-bearer recommendation would shift toward Iridium/Inmarsat as primary rather than backup.

Supporting Evidence: Geographic concentration of disruption reports inside known Iranian/Russian EW envelopes; absence of corresponding outage tickets in CONUS; SpaceX status page shows no constellation-level event; Iranian state-driven RF denial pattern inside Iran during 2025-2026 protests is established and recurring.

Ruling-Out Evidence: No new constellation incidents reported this cycle; Starlink launch cadence continues to grow normally; SpaceX firmware hardening continues.

SOURCES

The War Zone | C4ISRNET | Bellingcat OSINT | SpaceX Starlink Status | Space.com — Starlink count 05-MAY | KeepTrack — DTC constellation status

SAT-002	GPS/GNSS Spoofing & Jamming — Hormuz Corridor & Arabian Gulf	CONTINUED

TRACK	SATELLITE COMMS / GPS-GNSS / ELECTRONIC WARFARE
SUMMARY	Lloyd's List Intelligence has recorded 1,735+ total GNSS interference events since 28-FEB; pattern sustained this cycle with no material reduction despite the 05-MAY Rubio declaration that Operation Epic Fury has ended. Windward data continues to document AIS positions erroneously placing ships over airports, a nuclear power plant, and dry land. Bloomberg reporting this cycle documents crews navigating Hormuz on radar only after GPS failure. Three distinct GPS interference zones remain confirmed: (1) Qatar territorial waters; (2) international shipping lanes to Iraq/Kuwait en route to Hormuz; (3) within Hormuz traffic separation scheme. The Iranian Navy has reportedly guided non-coordinated tankers through the strait — a state-of-the-art use of EW combined with naval coercion. Aviation GNSS impact: EASA CZIB 2026-03 reissued post 24-APR; affected airspace and avoidance routings remain in force. EUROCONTROL GNSS NOTAMs continue. Energy sector operators using GPS-synchronized SCADA timing in Gulf-exposed operations must keep PTP/NTP backup synchronization verified and tested. Domestic CONUS GPS infrastructure not currently affected this cycle.
WHY THIS MATTERS	Hormuz GNSS denial is the longest-running active EW campaign affecting a maritime chokepoint that ~20% of global crude transits. The 1,735+ events since 28-FEB make this the largest sustained civilian GNSS denial event on record. Operational implications cross four sectors simultaneously: maritime navigation, aviation routing, energy SCADA timing, and financial transaction timing. PTP/NTP fallback discipline is no longer optional for any Gulf-exposed asset. The 05-MAY ceasefire did not lift the denial — this is now an institutionalized Iranian capability operating under the blockade overlay.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	Cross-sector comms-relevant exposure surfaces remain: • MARITIME LOGISTICS: AIS corruption, collision risk, dark operations. • ENERGY: SCADA timing disruption. • AVIATION: CDU anomalies, reroutes, EASA CZIB in force. • FINANCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: GPS-synchronized transaction timing. The post-Epic Fury EW posture (see EW-001 primary) has not reduced Iranian GNSS denial in the strait. Practitioner implication: maintain SAT-002 watch through any reopening of Hormuz; do not relax PTP/NTP fallback posture. DOMESTIC WATCH: No confirmed CONUS GPS infrastructure spillover. Watch for any geographic expansion of jamming footprint toward eastern Mediterranean air corridors. CONFIDENCE: HIGH.
ALT HYP	**AH-SAT-002: GNSS interference is principally space-weather or solar driven rather than deliberate Iranian EW [Almost no chance]** It is almost no chance that the sustained Hormuz GNSS denial reflects natural space-weather or solar-cycle effects rather than deliberate Iranian state action. If true, similar event clusters would appear in other comparable maritime corridors and would correlate with SWPC space-weather indicators. **Supporting Evidence:** Three distinct, geographically tight interference zones aligned with Iranian territorial reach; Iranian Navy reported guiding non-coordinated tankers through Hormuz consistent with intentional denial-then-pilot pattern; effect persists across solar conditions, including quiet periods. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** No comparable event clusters in Panama Canal, Malacca, Bab-el-Mandeb, or Suez corridors despite similar geomagnetic exposure; G2 storm 15-17 MAY this cycle is producing CONUS-wide HF degradation but does not produce localized AIS-on-airport spoofing signatures.
SOURCES	Windward Maritime AI | Lloyd's List Intelligence | EUROCONTROL GNSS NOTAMs | GPSJam.org | USCG NAVCEN GUIDE Tool | Bloomberg Hormuz Siege

SAT-004	Cell-Satellite Integration — FCC Commercial SCS Authorization Granted 11-MAY / BB8-10 Mid-June Launch / Positive Reversal	UPDATED
TRACK	SATELLITE COMMS / TERRESTRIAL CELLULAR / PUBLIC SAFETY	
SUMMARY	MATERIAL POSITIVE TURN THIS CYCLE. TRACK 1 — T-MOBILE / STARLINK (OPERATIONAL, ADVANCING): T-Satellite commercially launched July 2025. SpaceX now operates over 10,296 Starlink satellites in orbit; more than 650 direct-to-cell capable. Text messaging nationally available; voice calling beta expanded; data rollout the final phase. SpaceX at MWC Barcelona March 2026 rebranded the service as Starlink Mobile and announced V3 satellites targeting mid-2027 via Starship (10x downlink / 24x uplink vs V2 Mini). Deutsche Telekom signed for V3 service to 10 European countries. Starlink reported 10M+ global subscribers as of February 2026. TRACK 2 — AT&T / VERIZON / FIRSTNET via AST SpaceMobile (POSITIVE REVERSAL 11-MAY): On 11-MAY, the FCC granted AST SpaceMobile commercial Supplemental Coverage from Space (SCS) authorization to operate a constellation of up to 248 satellites delivering direct-to-device cellular broadband nationwide using 700 MHz and 800 MHz lowband spectrum in coordination with mobile network operator partners Verizon, AT&T, and FirstNet. In its Q1 2026 8-K (released 11-MAY), AST confirmed BlueBird 8, BlueBird 9, and BlueBird 10 are on track for delivery to Cape Canaveral with an expected orbital launch in mid-June on a Falcon 9. Phased arrays for the constellation are completed through BlueBird 28; BlueBird 11-33 are in advanced production. AST achieved a peak in-orbit data speed of 98.9 Mbps to an unmodified smartphone over international waters using BlueBird 6 (the sole operational Block 1 next-generation satellite after the 19-APR BlueBird 7 loss). Target remains approximately 45 satellites in orbit by end of 2026, supported by multi-partner launch agreements with Blue Origin, SpaceX, and others. AT&T CEO John Stankey on the Q1 2026 earnings call signaled openness to LEO partners beyond AST for D2D, including an existing Amazon Leo business-connectivity arrangement. CRITICAL PUBLIC SAFETY IMPLICATION: The FCC commercial SCS authorization materially de-risks the FirstNet satellite beta path. The schedule still depends on BB8-10 launching successfully in mid-June, but two of the three structural risks from the prior cycle (regulatory authorization, manufacturing readiness) have been resolved positively. TRACK 3 — VERIZON / SKYLO (STABLE): Verizon continues offering free satellite texting via Skylo on select newer phones, independent of the AST SpaceMobile agreement.	
WHY THIS MATTERS	For the first time since Issue 1, the FirstNet satellite path has resolved regulatory uncertainty in AT&T/AST's favor. This is the single most consequential commercial-space event affecting first-responder DTC in 2026. For agencies considering FirstNet satellite beta enrollment: the regulatory authorization gate is now closed in favor of go. Launch execution (BB8/9/10 in mid-June) is the only remaining material risk. For agencies running on T-Satellite today: nothing changes — T-Satellite remains the most operationally mature DTC option, and adding it as a backup tier does not require waiting for AST. For multi-bearer planning: do not decommission existing backup comms on the strength of 11-MAY alone. The satellite layer is on a credible 2026 path but is not yet operational at the scale required to carry public safety as a primary.	
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	The 11-MAY FCC commercial SCS authorization is the most consequential positive regulatory event for the FirstNet satellite path since the program's 2017 award. It converts AST's direct-to-device service from a tested-and-limited authority to a full commercial-deployment authority for up to 248 satellites in premium lowband spectrum. It reduces the structural risk that the 19-APR BlueBird 7 loss had introduced; the principal risk that remains is the mid-June BB8-10 launch execution.	

	T-Mobile's operational lead through Starlink remains substantial — T-Satellite is commercially live nationwide with text, voice expanding, and a satellite count exceeding 10,290 — but AT&T's satellite path is now materially more credible than it was 30 days ago. THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IMPLICATION: Public safety agencies should: (1) Continue planning for FirstNet satellite beta in 2H 2026, but build contingency for a 30-60 day slip if BB8-10 launch slips. (2) Confirm T-Satellite compatibility for agency devices as a stopgap satellite text/911 capability — this remains the highest-readiness public-safety-relevant DTC layer in operation today. (3) Maintain multi-bearer backup posture (HF, VHF/UHF, LMR, L-band MSS) through end of 2026; do not decommission backup comms on the assumption that any one DTC layer will reach full continuous nationwide coverage in 2026.
ALT HYP	**AH-SAT-004: BB8-10 mid-June launch slips materially (Q3 or later) and FirstNet satellite beta slides into 2027 [Roughly even chance]** There is a roughly even chance that the mid-June BB8-10 launch slips by more than 30 days, pushing FirstNet satellite beta enrollment into late 2026 or early 2027. Falcon 9 cadence and BB readiness both look favorable, but space launch schedules have a structural slip pattern and any anomaly resets the timeline. **Supporting Evidence:** AST manufacturing readiness through BB28 confirmed in 11-MAY 8-K; Falcon 9 has high launch reliability and current manifest accommodates the slot; FCC SCS authorization removes one major dependency. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** AST has missed multiple prior launch dates; the 19-APR BlueBird 7 lower-orbit incident demonstrates AST is not immune to deployment anomalies; Starship-class issues at SpaceX do not impact Falcon 9 directly but consume engineering attention.
SOURCES	AST SpaceMobile 8-K Q1 2026 — 11-MAY | AST Q1 2026 Investor Deck | LightReading — AST FCC D2D approval | LightReading — AT&T multi-LEO D2D | T-Mobile T-Satellite | AT&T — FirstNet Artemis II / AST SpaceMobile | KeepTrack — Starlink DTC constellation

SAT-005	AMSAT / Amateur Satellite Status — Hamvention 15-17 MAY in Progress, ISS Crossband Active, FO-29 Returning	UPDATED
TRACK	AMATEUR SATELLITE / EMCOMM / ARISS	
SUMMARY	AMSAT Live OSCAR Satellite Status Page shows robust activity across ISS FM, AO-7, AO-73, AO-91, AO-123, FO-29, JO-97, QO-100, RS-44, SO-50, and SO-125 during the 25 APR — 16 MAY reporting window. ISS crossband repeater remains active: 145.990 MHz uplink (PL 67 Hz) / 437.800 MHz downlink. ISS voice downlink 145.800 MHz (worldwide); uplink 144.49 MHz (ITU Region 2/3) or 145.20 MHz (ITU Region 1). VHF packet 145.825 MHz; UHF packet 437.550 MHz. FO-29 eclipse period (entered ~21-APR) is approaching the end of its ~1-month window; continuous-operation linear transponder availability returning approximately 20-MAY per JARL command schedule. Hamvention 2026 — IN PROGRESS THIS WEEKEND (15-17 MAY) in Xenia, OH. The principal annual amateur radio gathering; AMSAT and ARRL booths active; AMSAT pre-orders, talks, ARISS sessions. Operators traveling to/from Xenia this weekend should plan for G2 HF degradation (see Section 2 propagation) and use VHF/UHF or DMR for mobile coordination. QO-100 (Es'hail-2) is the only GEO amateur-radio transponder in orbit. Footprint covers Europe, Africa, Middle East, and western Asia — NOT CONUS. No GEO amateur-satellite bearer exists over North America.	
WHY THIS MATTERS	During the G2 geomagnetic storm in progress 15-17 MAY, amateur satellite bearers (LEO and ISS crossband) are substantially LESS affected than HF. This is operationally significant for any ARES/RACES net or served-agency activation this weekend.	

	Hamvention 15-17 MAY draws practitioner attention away from at-home operational watch posture in a weekend that also features G2 HF degradation, active Mid-South tornado risk, and AA26-097A Day 39 cyber threat — a combined-effects environment.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	Amateur satellites are GNSS-independent bearers — a useful resilience layer in a degraded-GNSS environment (see EW-001, SAT-002). Not a primary EMCOMM bearer: LEO pass-duration limits (5-12 minutes) and operator-skill requirements. During this weekend's G2 storm, satellite bearers are LESS affected than HF — a useful operational point for ARES/RACES net controllers planning the next 72 hours. For ARES/RACES: add ISS crossband repeater (145.990 up PL 67 / 437.800 down) to the resilience stack as a situational capability. Upcoming: 44th AMSAT Space Symposium 8-11 OCT in Jacksonville FL.
ALT HYP	**AH-SAT-005: G2 storm produces material amateur-satellite degradation rather than only HF degradation [Unlikely]** It is unlikely that the 15-17 MAY G2 storm will degrade VHF/UHF amateur satellite passes meaningfully beyond brief auroral-absorption windows. If it does, ARES/RACES net controllers should plan DMR/repeater-only operations and treat satellite as degraded for the weekend. **Supporting Evidence:** VHF/UHF satellite frequencies are above the ionospheric absorption window that drives HF degradation; LEO geometries are short and not polar-path-dependent for CONUS operators. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** Auroral absorption can produce localized 2m/70cm fades during peak Kp, particularly at high latitudes; some Doppler-shift adaptation may be needed during peak storming — but service-level loss is not expected.
SOURCES	AMSAT Live OSCAR Status | AMSAT News Service | ARISS Contact the ISS | AMSAT-UK | Hamvention 2026

NET-003	Submarine Cable Integrity — TeleGeography 04-MAY: 2Africa, SeaMeWe-6 Gulf Installs Delayed	UPDATED
TRACK	UNDERSEA CABLE / INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE	
SUMMARY	MATERIAL UPDATE THIS CYCLE. TeleGeography published a research report on 04-MAY documenting how the Iran war has delayed installation of the Gulf portions of major Red Sea cable networks, specifically 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6. The report notes that "when installation of these systems can resume is unclear" and that substantial delays in southern Red Sea cable repairs are spurring efforts to develop bypass solutions. No new US-nexus submarine cable cuts identified 25 APR — 16 MAY. No direct US consumer or business internet impact identified this cycle. Approximately 18% of global data traffic between Asia, Africa, and Europe transits 17 Red Sea cables. Previous Red Sea cable repairs have taken up to six months given regional instability. Both Hormuz and Red Sea remain off-limits to commercial cable repair vessels under the active blockade overlay (see EW-001 primary) — any Gulf corridor cable fault would go unrepaired for the duration of hostilities. Primary risk mechanism is accidental: GPS-degraded vessel traffic in shallow cable corridors creates anchor-drag and grounding probability (see SAT-002 mechanism). Concentrated US exposure: Middle East-adjacent cloud regions (AWS, Azure, Google Cloud GCC), US enterprises with significant Gulf operations. Watch trigger: any TeleGeography or operator notice of new Gulf corridor cable fault.	
WHY THIS MATTERS	Submarine cable infrastructure carries roughly 99% of intercontinental data. The 17 Red Sea cables alone carry ~18% of global Asia-Africa-Europe data traffic. Any sustained Gulf-corridor cable degradation translates to higher latency, capacity constraints, and routing	

	detours that can ripple into CONUS cloud-service performance for enterprises with Middle East dependencies. The 04-MAY TeleGeography report is the first operator-side confirmation that the conflict overlay is now materially affecting cable build-out, not just repairs. This is a structural shift, not a tactical disruption. For CONUS practitioners: cloud-region failover is the practical mitigation. Direct consumer internet impact remains negligible.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	Threat remains structural and now demonstrably operational — not kinetic, but cable-deployment timelines are now confirmed slipping under the conflict overlay. US-nexus direct consumer and business internet connectivity is not at near-term risk; the connectivity exposure is on cloud and enterprise services routed through Gulf corridors. Practitioner implication: organizations with significant Middle East cloud-region dependency (US Defense, NGOs, energy majors) should reconfirm multi-region active-active failover posture, particularly toward EU and Asia-Pacific cloud regions. 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 delays may force higher latency for Gulf-routed traffic for many additional months. CONFIDENCE: HIGH.
ALT HYP	**AH-NET-003: Gulf cable installs resume within 60 days as Pakistan-brokered talks de-escalate access denial [Unlikely]** It is unlikely that 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 Gulf-segment installations resume within 60 days. If they did, latency and capacity pressure on enterprise Middle East cloud routes would ease materially through Q3 2026. **Supporting Evidence:** Pakistan-brokered talks were the basis for pausing US "Project Freedom" escort operations; some diplomatic motion exists; cable operators have strong commercial incentive to push for restart approvals. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** Iran retains operational control of Hormuz with no announced timeline for blockade lift; previous Red Sea cable repair episodes have taken up to six months even without active denial; AA26-097A Iranian APT activity at Day 39 suggests escalating, not de-escalating, posture.
SOURCES	TeleGeography — Hormuz Cable Analysis | AGBI — Gulf subsea cable risk 04-MAY | Submarine Networks | TeleGeography Submarine Cable Map

SECTION 4 | TERRESTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

TERR-001	FirstNet / AT&T — $2B Upgrade Agreement Active / Satellite Beta Path Materially De-Risked by 11-MAY FCC SCS Auth	UPDATED
TRACK	TERRESTRIAL CELLULAR / FIRSTNET / PUBLIC SAFETY	
SUMMARY	The 31-MAR-2026 $2B NTIA-AT&T FirstNet contract restructuring remains in effect: $1B cost reduction to FirstNet and $1B new investment in network and coverage enhancements (gap-closure, 5G public safety core, mobile deployable units). Reinvestment direction sits with the FirstNet Authority Board and public safety advisory councils. The House Energy and Commerce Committee continues advancing bipartisan legislation to reauthorize FirstNet through 2037. SATELLITE LAYER UPDATE: On 11-MAY, the FCC granted AST SpaceMobile a commercial Supplemental Coverage from Space (SCS) authorization to operate up to 248 satellites with 700/800 MHz lowband spectrum in coordination with AT&T, Verizon, and FirstNet (see SAT-004). AST in its Q1 2026 8-K confirmed BlueBird 8, 9, and 10 are on track for mid-June launch on a Falcon 9.	

	Operational status this cycle: NOMINAL. No network-wide outages or interoperability failures identified 25 APR — 16 MAY. Band 14 spectrum preemption active across enrolled agencies.
WHY THIS MATTERS	FirstNet is the dedicated nationwide public safety broadband network. Any structural change in its underlying spectrum, satellite layer, or contract terms directly affects first-responder communications resilience for all 30,000+ enrolled agencies and 6 million+ users. The 11-MAY FCC SCS authorization is the single most consequential positive event for FirstNet satellite resilience since the 2017 award. Agencies that paused FirstNet satellite beta planning after the 19-APR BlueBird 7 loss can resume planning this cycle. The $2B restructuring (31-MAR) directs material new investment into gap-closure and deployable units — board-level reinvestment decisions in coming cycles will determine which underserved areas see priority coverage upgrades.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	ACTIONABLE CHANGE THIS CYCLE: The FirstNet satellite beta confidence-level reduction recommended in Issue 3 should now be partially restored. The FCC SCS authorization removes the regulatory uncertainty, and the mid-June BB8-10 launch on Falcon 9 (rather than New Glenn) reduces vehicle-execution risk. Launch execution remains the principal remaining risk. Emergency managers with FirstNet enrollment should: (1) Continue NOT to decommission backup comms on the assumption that any specific satellite layer arrives on a specific date in 2026. (2) Confirm T-Satellite compatibility for agency devices as a stopgap satellite text/911 capability — still the highest-readiness public-safety-relevant DTC layer today. (3) Watch AST BB8-10 mid-June launch campaign closely — this is the next milestone gate for FirstNet satellite beta in 2H 2026. Cross-reference: SAT-004.
ALT HYP	**AH-TERR-001: AT&T pursues multi-LEO D2D and AST SpaceMobile becomes one of several satellite layers rather than primary [Likely]** It is likely that AT&T executes on multi-LEO satellite partnerships beyond AST, given CEO Stankey's 11-MAY explicit signal. If so, the FirstNet satellite layer becomes a diversified bearer set (AST + Amazon Project Kuiper + potentially others) rather than an AST-only dependency, which materially reduces single-vendor risk. **Supporting Evidence:** Stankey's direct on-record statement on the Q1 earnings call; AT&T already has an existing Amazon Leo arrangement for business connectivity; carrier-side diversification is consistent with prior AT&T spectrum strategy patterns; FCC SCS regime supports multiple constellation authorizations. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** AST has the dominant first-mover regulatory position and the 700/800 MHz coordination is AST-specific; AT&T continues to publicly promote AST as the FirstNet satellite partner; switching costs and integration complexity are non-trivial.
SOURCES	NTIA Press Release 31-MAR-2026 | StateScoop — FirstNet $2B Deal | AT&T — FirstNet Artemis II | AST SpaceMobile 8-K Q1 2026 — 11-MAY | LightReading — AST FCC D2D approval | FirstNet Authority | APCO International

SECTION 5 | ELECTRONIC WARFARE WATCH

EW-001	Iranian EW Posture — GPS Denial and SATCOM Jamming, Hormuz Theater (Post-Epic Fury)	UPDATED
TRACK	ELECTRONIC WARFARE / SATELLITE	
SUMMARY	Iranian EW posture remains the primary driver of the Gulf GPS/GNSS crisis. The 05-MAY end of Operation Epic Fury (Rubio announcement) has NOT reduced the operational EW footprint. Confirmed assets: Samen-1 GPS jammers; Mersad-family SATCOM jamming. Primary areas: Persian Gulf, Hormuz maritime approaches, Gulf of Oman, Iraqi airspace. Scale: 1,735+ total GNSS interference events since 28-FEB per Lloyd's List Intelligence. Pattern sustained at high tempo through this cycle. IRGC has continued to assert maritime control under the post-Epic Fury blockade overlay — issuing transit-coordination demands and threatening "decisive action" against non-coordinated vessels. The 21-APR seizure of cargo vessels and 14-15 MAY ship-strike incidents in the strait confirm sustained kinetic risk. US/allied forces also employ defensive GNSS jamming, creating a congested electronic environment. US "Project Freedom" (15-APR US-led escort initiative) was paused pending Pakistan-brokered talks but the underlying EW environment remains active. Commercial SATCOM (Inmarsat, Iridium, Starlink) continue reporting varying disruption levels in affected zones. DOMESTIC: No confirmed spillover to CONUS GPS infrastructure.	
WHY THIS MATTERS	The Iranian EW posture is the operational mechanism behind the Hormuz GNSS denial (SAT-002), the SATCOM degradation (SAT-001), and the cable repair-access denial (NET-003). Understanding the EW driver matters because all three downstream effects will persist as long as the EW posture does — even after Operation Epic Fury was declared over. For US Defense, Navy, USCG, and US-flagged commercial maritime: this is the active EW environment in which any operations transit will occur. Position-spoofing and SATCOM jamming have become institutionalized capabilities, not surge employments. For CONUS: spillover risk remains the watch item, not the current state.	
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	Iranian GPS denial capability remains assessed as capable of disrupting commercial aviation and maritime navigation in a 200-300nm radius from employment sites. The Rubio announcement that Epic Fury is "over" has not changed the EW posture; it has changed the diplomatic framing. The dual blockade (US naval blockade of Iran + Iranian blockade of Hormuz) persists, and the EW environment that supports the Iranian blockade is part of that posture. Energy sector operators with GPS-synchronized SCADA timing in the Gulf region should maintain NTP fallback as a standing configuration. Cross-reference: SAT-002 for operator impact details, NET-003 for cable repair-access implications.	

ALT HYP

AH-EW-001: Iran escalates EW posture from denial to active spoofing of US-flagged military assets [Unlikely]

It is unlikely that Iran will escalate from civilian GNSS denial to targeted spoofing of US military assets transiting the Gulf. If it did, this would represent a material escalation that could trigger a renewed US kinetic response and effectively void the 05-MAY ceasefire framing.

Supporting Evidence: Iran has demonstrated GNSS spoofing capability; precedent exists for state-vs-state EW escalation; Pakistan-brokered talks remain fragile and could collapse on any number of triggers; AA26-097A Iranian cyber posture is at Day 39 and escalating.

Ruling-Out Evidence: US naval blockade of Iranian ports remains as deterrent leverage; Iranian leadership has incentive to maintain ambiguity that allows blockade economics to function without triggering new US kinetic action; observed pattern targets commercial maritime, not military, traffic.

SOURCES	C4ISRNET | The War Zone | Bellingcat | EUROCONTROL NOTAMs | GPSJam.org | Time — Rubio Epic Fury Over 05-MAY

SECTION 6 | PUBLIC SAFETY COMMS & 9-1-1 SERVICES

PS-001	9-1-1 / PSAP Infrastructure — Nominal This Cycle / FCC NG911 Reliability Rules Near Finalization	CONTINUED

TRACK	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMS / 9-1-1 / PSAP
SUMMARY	9-1-1 OPERATIONAL STATUS (16 MAY 2026): No confirmed active nationwide or multi-state 9-1-1 outages identified 25 APR — 16 MAY. Carrier network status nominal per Downdetector and carrier status pages for the reporting window. VERIZON JANUARY 2026 OUTAGE AFTERMATH: FCC inquiry into the 14-JAN-2026 Verizon ~10-hour software-caused outage (multiple metros, ~173,000 Downdetector reports at peak) remains open; no final finding published. FCC NG911 RELIABILITY RULEMAKING: Per Beyond Telecom Law Blog (Keller and Heckman, 02-APR), the FCC is close to finalizing its NG911 reliability rules. Comment cycle closed last year; final rules expected late summer 2026. Proposed changes expand the definition of Covered 911 Service Provider (C9SP) to capture IP-era routers and ESInet operators, add physical-diversity requirements, expand network monitoring expectations, establish backup power requirements for IP environments, and propose an interstate ESInet interoperability framework. FCC 30-MINUTE PSAP OSP OUTAGE NOTIFICATION RULE remains in force as of April 15, 2025. PENNSYLVANIA: PA 911 system experienced an intermittent NG911 outage in July 2025 caused by a Comtech vendor issue; resolved same day; PEMA issued WEA/EAS statewide alert during the outage — a model use of IPAWS for 9-1-1 infrastructure failure notification. No PA-specific 9-1-1 issues identified this cycle.
WHY THIS MATTERS	9-1-1 service availability is the most direct measure of comms-layer service to the public. The 14-JAN Verizon 10-hour outage is the largest single 9-1-1-relevant carrier event since 2020 and remains under FCC inquiry; the NG911 reliability FNPRM expected late summer 2026 is the regulatory response. For state 911 authorities and PSAPs: the FNPRM's expanded C9SP definition will pull IP-era providers (ESInet operators, NG911 vendors, IP-router operators) into direct FCC reliability obligations they did not previously face. Contract terms and service-level agreements written before the new rules may need renegotiation. For practitioners: the FCC 30-minute PSAP outage notification rule (in force since April 2025) is the operational pathway agencies should be using; verify carrier-side contact information is current.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	The NG911 reliability FNPRM remains the most consequential regulatory development for PSAP operations this cycle. If finalized as proposed, it would extend direct FCC reliability obligations to IP-era providers that currently sit outside the 2013 rules, require physical-diversity failover in critical paths, and standardize interstate ESInet interoperability. Practical implication for PSAPs and state 911 authorities: inventory C9SP relationships now, because the expanded definition will capture providers who did not previously consider themselves C9SPs — exposing contract assumptions to regulatory scrutiny. The FCC 30-minute PSAP direct notification rule (in force since April 2025) is the appropriate response mechanism for outage events — PSAPs should confirm their OSPs have current contact information for this notification pathway. Agencies in elevated-threat jurisdictions (PREP-CON 3 sustained on ceasefire fragility): confirm your 10-digit non-emergency backup numbers are published and drilled; verify Text-to-911 capability is active for your PSAP coverage area.

ALT HYP	**AH-PS-001: NG911 FNPRM is materially weakened in final rule due to industry pushback, leaving C9SP expansion narrow [Roughly even chance]** There is a roughly even chance that the final NG911 reliability rule will materially narrow the C9SP expansion proposed in the FNPRM. If so, many IP-era providers would remain outside direct FCC reliability obligation and the rule would deliver less than the public-safety community expected. **Supporting Evidence:** Carrier-side industry opposition to expanded coverage is well-resourced; the 21-APR SCOTUS oral argument on FCC authority creates uncertainty that the agency may try to manage by softening contested provisions; final rule publication is months away. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** The 14-JAN Verizon outage provides political cover for the agency to hold firm; bipartisan public safety advocacy supports the expanded scope; FCC Chair public statements have emphasized the consumer-protection rationale.
SOURCES	FCC NG911 Reliability FNPRM | Beyond Telecom Law — NG911 Rules 02-APR | FCC Network Outage Reporting (NORS) | FCC 9-1-1 Outage Rules | PEMA PA 9-1-1 Outage Notice | APCO International

SECTION 7 | FCC & REGULATORY PULSE

REG-001	FCC Enforcement — SCOTUS Arguments 21-APR Suggest Court Skeptical of Limiting FCC; Pirate Radio and CPNI Tracks Continue	UPDATED
TRACK	REGULATORY / FCC ENFORCEMENT	
SUMMARY	SCOTUS HEADLINE THIS CYCLE: At oral argument on 21-APR in FCC v. AT&T (No. 25-406) and Verizon v. FCC (No. 25-567), the Supreme Court appeared skeptical of striking down the FCC's forfeiture-order process. Per multiple post-argument summaries, Chief Justice Roberts characterized the carriers' concern as primarily reputational, and Justice Kavanaugh stated the carriers had "won on the law going forward one way or the other" given government concessions about pre-payment requirements. Decision expected by end of June. A ruling broadly preserving FCC forfeiture authority would resolve the constitutional uncertainty that has been hanging over every FCC NAL since the 2024 Jarkesy decision. A ruling against FCC forfeiture authority remains possible but appears less probable than going into argument. PIRATE / FORFEITURE CARRYOVER: 10-APR NY NIPRBs continue the PIRATE Act enforcement pattern; 02-APR $4.5M RMD marketing-rules NAL; 07-APR USF debarment of seven convicted individuals; 30-MAR $60,000 Pirate Act forfeiture affirmed. 08-JAN-2026 Marlink Inc. Team Telecom consent decree ($175,000 voluntary contribution + comprehensive compliance plan) remains the landmark national-security enforcement of this cycle. TCPA/ROBOCALL: FCC consent revocation rule effective 11-APR-2026 (after waiver for financial institutions); NPRM on robocall numbering policies remains open from 27-MAR-2026 adoption.	
SOURCES	FCC Enforcement Orders | FCC Enforcement Headlines | Marlink Team Telecom Consent Decree | SCOTUSblog — FCC v. AT&T argument 21-APR | The Hill — SCOTUS skeptical 21-APR | FCC TCPA Rule DA-26-12	
WHY THIS MATTERS	The 21-APR SCOTUS oral argument in FCC v. AT&T / Verizon v. FCC will determine whether the FCC can continue using its forfeiture-order process for civil penalties without first going through Article III courts. A ruling against the FCC would dismantle a core enforcement mechanism the agency has used for decades, with cascading effects on pirate radio enforcement, common carrier compliance, and CPNI/data-broker actions.	

	The post-argument signal that the Court appeared skeptical of limiting the FCC is the most consequential update on this track since the case was granted certiorari. Decision expected by end of June.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	The 21-APR SCOTUS oral argument is the most consequential structural event for FCC enforcement authority since the 2024 Jarkesy decision. The post-argument signals lean toward FCC preserving the core of its forfeiture process — a material change in expectation from when the case was first granted. Marlink Team Telecom enforcement remains the most significant national-security regulatory development for telecom this cycle; carriers with foreign-nexus ownership or DOJ mitigation obligations should continue to treat compliance review as a current-cycle priority given the post-Epic Fury threat environment (PREP-CON 3 sustained). Pirate radio enforcement continues accelerating under Chairman Carr; the 10-APR NY NIPRBs extend the pattern of landlord liability enforcement authorized by the 2020 PIRATE Act. ARES/RACES: report unlicensed operation in your area via complaints.fcc.gov.
ALT HYP	**AH-REG-001: SCOTUS rules against FCC, dismantling the forfeiture-order process and forcing Article III adjudication [Unlikely]** It is unlikely (post 21-APR argument) that SCOTUS rules against the FCC in a way that dismantles the forfeiture-order process. If it did, FCC enforcement tempo would slow materially through 2027 as cases route through district courts, and pirate radio + CPNI enforcement would be most affected. **Supporting Evidence:** Post-Jarkesy doctrine creates a plausible legal pathway for narrowing FCC authority; the case granted certiorari at all suggests at least four justices saw a real question; carrier-side litigation incentives are strong. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** Roberts characterized the carriers' concern as primarily reputational ("PR problem"); Kavanaugh's "won on the law going forward" comment implies the Court sees this as resolved practically; government concessions on pre-payment requirements may have eliminated the live controversy on which a sweeping ruling would rest.
SOURCES	FCC Enforcement Headlines | Marlink Team Telecom Consent Decree | SCOTUSblog — FCC v. AT&T argument 21-APR | The Hill — SCOTUS skeptical 21-APR | FCC TCPA Rule DA-26-12

REG-002	FCC Space & Spectrum — 11-MAY Commercial SCS Authorization Granted to AST SpaceMobile / Space Modernization NPRM Continues	UPDATED
TRACK	REGULATORY / FCC / SPECTRUM / SATELLITE	
SUMMARY	HEADLINE THIS CYCLE: On 11-MAY, the FCC granted AST SpaceMobile a commercial Supplemental Coverage from Space (SCS) authorization to deploy and operate up to 248 satellites delivering direct-to-device cellular broadband nationwide using 700/800 MHz lowband spectrum in coordination with Verizon, AT&T, and FirstNet (see SAT-004, TERR-001). 26-MAR-2026: FCC unanimously adopted NPRM for spectrum allocation for space telemetry, tracking, and command (TT&C) operations — part of broader commercial space economy support posture. FCC continues processing Space Modernization NPRM (Part 25 overhaul to new Part 100; adopted Oct 2025, comments Jan 2026): • Streamline satellite licensing to a "licensing assembly line." • Extend license terms to 20 years. • Require space situational awareness data sharing from satellite operators. Proposed rules may be finalized by end of 2026. DIRECT RELEVANCE TO COMMS WATCH: These proceedings directly affect Starlink, AST SpaceMobile, and other DTC operators whose buildout timelines and spectrum positions are subject to FCC approval. The 09-JAN-2026 FCC authorization of 7,500	

	additional Gen2 Starlink satellites (total approved 15,000) remains the structural Starlink-side authority. The EchoStar S-band spectrum AT&T is acquiring (pending FCC approval, ~$23B deal) is also implicated in the Starlink Mobile V3 spectrum strategy. FirstNet reauthorization: House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced bipartisan legislation to reauthorize FirstNet through 2037 this cycle.
WHY THIS MATTERS	The 11-MAY SCS authorization for AST is the regulatory keystone for first-responder DTC in 2026. Without it, the entire FirstNet satellite beta path was uncertain. With it, satellite resilience for public safety has a credible 2026 path for the first time since Issue 1. The Space Modernization NPRM, if finalized as proposed, reshapes commercial space licensing from a case-by-case slog into an "assembly line" process — a structural shift in how quickly DTC operators (Starlink Mobile V3, AST follow-on tranches, Amazon Kuiper) can scale. For agencies and practitioners: this is the policy substrate underneath every DTC service decision in 2H 2026 and 2027.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	The Space Modernization NPRM trajectory points toward a more permissive, faster licensing regime; multi-constellation D2D is now an FCC-supported policy trajectory rather than a special-case authorization pattern. FirstNet reauthorization through 2037 (House E&C bipartisan advancement) provides legislative durability that complements the regulatory de-risking from 11-MAY. The combined picture is structural support for first-responder DTC at both regulatory and statutory levels. Watch trigger: FCC space modernization final rule publication; any FirstNet reauthorization Senate movement.
ALT HYP	**AH-REG-002: FCC Space Modernization final rules are materially narrowed and DTC licensing remains case-by-case [Unlikely]** It is unlikely that the FCC walks back the Space Modernization NPRM's assembly-line licensing approach in the final rule. If it did, DTC operator buildout timelines would slow and the multi-LEO D2D path that AT&T and others are pursuing would face more friction. **Supporting Evidence:** FCC chair has publicly committed to commercial-space acceleration as a policy priority; the 11-MAY SCS authorization is a concrete data point of that policy in action; carrier and operator support for streamlining is bipartisan and well-coordinated. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** Environmental, orbital-debris, and astronomical-observation interest groups have filed substantive opposition comments; final rule timing (late 2026) leaves room for political shifts; SCOTUS FCC v. AT&T decision could constrain FCC rulemaking flexibility depending on its scope.
SOURCES	AST SpaceMobile FCC SCS auth 11-MAY | FCC Space Modernization NPRM | Morgan Lewis — FCC Space Economy April 2026 | StateScoop — FirstNet Reauthorization

SECTION 7B | IPAWS / EAS / PUBLIC ALERTING SYSTEMS

IPAWS-001	IPAWS / EAS / WEA — Operational / FCC Modernization NPRM in Deliberation / Post-Epic Fury Ceasefire Posture	UPDATED
TRACK	PUBLIC ALERTING / IPAWS / EAS / WEA	
SUMMARY	IPAWS OPERATIONAL STATUS (16-MAY-2026): IPAWS is fully operational. No disruptions to the IPAWS-OPEN aggregation/distribution platform or EAS national relay chain identified 25 APR — 16 MAY. WEA delivery to compatible devices remains functional. NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards nominal at the IPAWS-feed layer. AWIPS rolling software updates ongoing across 122 weather forecast offices nationwide — individual NWR	

	transmitters experience 2-3 day scheduled outages on a rolling basis. Local NWR transmitter outages tracked separately in DTR WX section. 1,500+ federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial alerting authorities currently active in IPAWS. FCC MODERNIZATION NPRM (IN DELIBERATION): FCC adopted the EAS/WEA re-examination NPRM at its 07-AUG-2025 Open Meeting (PS Docket No. 25-224); comment period closed 10-OCT-2025; rulemaking is in deliberation phase with new rules expected mid-2026. Key proposals under consideration: integration of 5G and AI-driven alerting; multilingual WEA expansion beyond current English/Spanish requirement; expanded alert categories (cybersecurity threats, infrastructure outages); alternative distribution via streaming, OTT, social media; geo-targeting accuracy improvements. Broadcaster concerns: alert fatigue if categories expanded too broadly; request to preserve analog/digital radio as primary backbone rather than replacing with app-based delivery. FEMA: Next Generation Warning System Grant Program (NGWSGP) FY2025 funding opportunity remains open. IPAWS Message Design Dashboard (MDD) v2.0 active since April 2025 — includes missing/endangered persons and all-clear categories.
WHY THIS MATTERS	IPAWS is the sole nationwide federal alerting backbone reaching the public via EAS (broadcast/cable), WEA (cellular), NOAA Weather Radio, and IPAWS-OPEN APIs. Any decision in the FCC modernization NPRM about whether to preserve broadcast radio as the primary EAS backbone has direct consequences for resilience under power-grid failure, network exhaustion, and cyber-driven outages. For 1,500+ alerting authorities: the FCC may finalize rules mid-2026 that change CAP message construction, expand WEA categories, or alter distribution architecture. Authorities should be tracking the NPRM closely. For practitioners during the 15-17 MAY combined event window: confirm MDD v2.0 templates are current and that backup CAP drafting capability is trained — a real activation could occur during the G2 storm, tornado window, or cyber incident this weekend.
ANALYST ASSESSMENT	The FCC NPRM remains operationally significant for emergency managers and IPAWS alerting authorities. The current comment record reveals a tension between two legitimate priorities: (1) Modernizing EAS/WEA to reach a mobile-first, streaming-dominant audience that no longer has a television or radio as their primary media consumption device. (2) Preserving the resilience of the existing infrastructure that has proven survivable in widespread network disruptions. Analyst position: the FCC should NOT phase out broadcast radio as the primary EAS backbone. Broadcast radio is the only mass-alert mechanism that: (a) Functions during a power-grid failure when cellular networks have exhausted backup power. (b) Requires no device registration or app. (c) Is receivable on battery-powered devices. (d) Has 77 Primary Entry Point (PEP) stations with hardened power and communications specifically for national emergency use. In the current post-Epic-Fury posture with sustained Hormuz blockade and Day 39 active CI cyber threat, degrading the broadcast backbone in favor of app-based alerting would reduce alerting resilience precisely when resilience is most needed. Emergency managers with IPAWS alerting authority: review your MDD v2.0 templates and confirm backup CAP message drafting capability is trained and tested. Consider conducting a local IPAWS activation drill this cycle given the elevated threat posture and the G2 geomagnetic storm 15-17 MAY — a useful real-world scenario for combined cyber/space-weather exercise design.
ALT HYP	**AH-IPAWS-001: FCC final rule phases broadcast radio out of primary EAS backbone status in favor of app-based delivery [Unlikely]**

	It is unlikely that the FCC final rule phases out broadcast radio as the primary EAS backbone in favor of app-based delivery. If it did, alerting resilience under power-grid failure or network exhaustion would degrade materially, and the 77 PEP stations would lose their structural role. **Supporting Evidence:** Tech-industry comments in the rulemaking favor mobile-first delivery; the FCC modernization framing emphasizes reaching streaming-only audiences; broadcasters' commercial interest in EAS-required-status is sometimes painted as self-interested rent-seeking. **Ruling-Out Evidence:** Broadcast resilience characteristics (power-independent, app-free, battery-receivable) are technical realities; the 77 PEP infrastructure represents sunk federal investment with no app-based equivalent; bipartisan public-safety advocacy supports preserving broadcast backbone; the post-Epic Fury / AA26-097A threat environment strengthens the resilience-first argument.
SOURCES	FEMA IPAWS | FCC EAS Page | FCC Alerting Modernization NPRM | Radio World — EAS Stakeholder Comments | FEMA NGWSGP Grant Program | CRS IPAWS Report

FOOTER | CARRY-FORWARD STATUS (NO STANDALONE ENTRY THIS CYCLE)

Three systems are tracked in the Infrastructure BLUF but did not warrant standalone entries this cycle. Each returns to full entry treatment when activity reaches the operational reporting threshold. The trigger conditions are listed below.

SAT-003 • DirecTV / DISH / EchoStar / SiriusXM

STATUS: Subscriber service nominal. DirecTV-DISH merger remains definitively dead. EchoStar $23B spectrum sale to AT&T pending FCC approval, slated to close mid-2026; the operational thread (EchoStar S-band implications for AT&T / Starlink Mobile V3) is tracked in REG-002.

RETURN-TO-ENTRY TRIGGER: *Any service-affecting outage, an FCC decision on the EchoStar-AT&T transaction, or a material change to Boost Mobile/DISH structure.*

TERR-002 • Backbone / BGP

STATUS: NSTR this cycle. Monitoring via Kentik, RIPE NCC, and Cloudflare Radar shows no BGP route leaks, IXP outages, or sustained submarine cable faults in the 25 APR — 16 MAY window. The 14-JAN-2026 Verizon 10-hour cellular outage remains under FCC inquiry and is shaping NG911 reliability rulemaking (see PS-001).

RETURN-TO-ENTRY TRIGGER: *Any large carrier BGP route leak, IXP outage, sustained transatlantic submarine cable fault, or new FCC action on the 14-JAN Verizon outage.*

PS-002 • FCC Enforcement — Pittsburgh PA Investigations

STATUS: Both open items continue with no disposition this cycle: (1) KD3ASC Notice of Violation for inadvertent Part 90 retransmission via BTech UV-Pro Audio Relay; (2) FCC Allegheny County antisemitic broadcast / EMS interference investigation, no arrest as of 16-MAY. Standing operator guidance (disable Audio Relay if Part 90 frequencies are programmed) is now permanent in Section 8 Amateur Radio Corner.

RETURN-TO-ENTRY TRIGGER: *FCC disposition on either case, or any new comparable incident in another jurisdiction that elevates this from local to pattern.*

SECTION 8 | AMATEUR RADIO CORNER

ARES / RACES STATUS

No formal ARES/RACES activation reported for the 25 APR — 16 MAY window. Space weather is the operational story for this weekend: a G2 (Moderate) geomagnetic storm driven by a large geoeffective coronal hole HSS is in progress 15-17 MAY, with Kp peaking at 6. HF will be DEGRADED through Sunday — 80m/60m/40m remain useable for short-haul (under 500mi), but longer-skip and polar paths are CLOSED or severely degraded. ARES/RACES net controllers anywhere should expect higher missed-check-in rates, plan VHF/UHF and DMR as

the resilient bearers for any severe-weather or exercise activation this weekend, and brief served-agency partners that satellite and L-band MSS (T-Satellite, Skylo, Iridium) are the GNSS-independent and storm-independent bearers available. Pennsylvania operators: PEMA ACS state net 3.9935 MHz LSB remains the primary statewide HF coordination channel but will be propagation-limited through the weekend; DMR TG 31420 on the Pennsylvania DMR network for backup voice; York County coordination via W3HZU. Operators traveling to Dayton Hamvention 15-17 MAY: plan mobile coordination on VHF/UHF and DMR, not HF.

HAMVENTION 2026 — 15-17 MAY, XENIA OH (IN PROGRESS)

The principal annual amateur radio convention is running this weekend at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Xenia, OH. AMSAT, ARRL, ARES, RACES, and AUXCOMM presences are active; major equipment vendors and forums on emergency communications, DMR, satellite operations, and digital modes throughout. Operators on the road this weekend should be aware that the G2 storm coincides with the event — long-haul HF will not be your friend going to or from the event, but VHF/UHF repeaters along the I-70 / I-71 corridors and DMR TGs remain operational.

OPERATIONAL REMINDER — PROGRAMMED FREQUENCY DISCIPLINE

- Inhibit transmit on NOAA Weather frequencies (162.400–162.550 MHz) in capable transceivers. With AWIPS rolling updates causing rotating NWR transmitter outages nationwide, many operators are adjacent to areas where WX Radio is the formal all-hazards channel — ensure your rig cannot accidentally key up on it.
- Audio Relay / Cross-Band Repeat — STANDING GUIDANCE: DISABLE if public safety, government, or other Part 90 frequencies are in your receive bank. Pattern of inadvertent retransmission violations is increasing nationally with the proliferation of multi-function HTs (e.g., BTech UV-Pro). FCC Notices of Violation have been issued on this pattern; treat your radio as a transmitter that can leak any frequency it can hear if Audio Relay is enabled.
- Verify your FCC license is current and covers your operating frequencies. License lookup: wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp. With elevated-threat posture sustained (PREP-CON 3 on ceasefire fragility), operating on an expired license during an emergency response is both a legal and operational problem.
- T-Satellite / AST SpaceMobile satellite backup: if your agency or household does not yet have satellite messaging capability, T-Satellite ($10/mo on most modern smartphones, no hardware required) provides text and 911 messaging in CONUS dead zones and remains the most operationally mature DTC option. The 11-MAY FCC commercial SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile (see SAT-004, TERR-001) materially de-risks the FirstNet satellite beta path, but BB8/9/10 launch is still mid-June; do not decommission existing backup comms until the satellite layer is operational.

SECTION 9 | ANALYST NOTES

CROSS-TRACK ASSESSMENT — POSITIVE ARC MATERIALLY DE-RISKED, NEGATIVE ARC PERSISTS POST-CEASEFIRE

Since Issue 1, Fortune Favors the Prepared has tracked two converging long-arc storylines in the communications environment: a negative arc in the Hormuz theater (GPS/GNSS denial, EW escalation, submarine cable repair-access blocked, Iranian APT activity against US critical infrastructure) and a positive arc in cell-satellite integration (T-Satellite commercially live, AST SpaceMobile FirstNet satellite beta announced for 2026). Both arcs moved materially this cycle, in opposite directions from the prior issue. On the positive side: on 11-MAY the FCC granted AST SpaceMobile commercial Supplemental Coverage from Space authorization for up to 248 satellites operating on 700/800 MHz lowband spectrum coordinated with Verizon, AT&T, and FirstNet. This is a structural de-risking event for the FirstNet satellite beta pathway — the regulatory pathway that was the dominant uncertainty after the BB7 lower-orbit incident covered in Issue 3 is now resolved in AST's favor. AST's 11-MAY 8-K confirms BB8/9/10 launch on Falcon 9 in mid-June, with phased arrays completed through BB28 and 45-satellite 2026 target reaffirmed. Concurrently, AT&T CEO John Stankey publicly stated AT&T is open to multi-LEO satellite partnerships

beyond AST, signaling carrier-side risk diversification that further de-risks the operational outcome for FirstNet end users. On the negative side: Operation Epic Fury was declared over on 05-MAY by Secretary Rubio, but Iran's Hormuz blockade persists, the US-proposed "Project Freedom" escort operation has been paused, GPS/GNSS spoofing in the Strait remains sustained with crews navigating on radar only per Bloomberg this cycle, AA26-097A Iranian APT activity against Rockwell/Allen-Bradley PLCs is now on Day 39 with 5,219+ exposed PLCs globally, and the 04-MAY TeleGeography report confirms the war has materially delayed Gulf installs of 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 submarine cables. The practitioner implication is a measured shift: the satellite layer is on a credible 2026 path for the first time since Issue 1, but it is not yet operational at the scale required to be load-bearing, and the negative comms environment that motivated the multi-bearer posture in the first place has not improved — it has stabilized at an elevated baseline. Appropriate action posture this cycle: maintain the multi-bearer backup stack (HF, VHF/UHF, LMR, Winlink, L-band MSS, T-Satellite) without decommissioning anything, while beginning planning for FirstNet satellite beta enrollment conditional on successful BB8/9/10 deployment in mid-June and successful constellation buildout through Q4 2026.

SPACE WEATHER AND CYBER CONVERGENCE — WEEKEND OF 16-18 MAY

A second analytical note specific to this cycle: the G2 (Moderate) geomagnetic storm in progress 15-17 MAY coincides with active CI cyber threat (AA26-097A Day 39, 5 KEV adds this cycle including a CVSS 10.0 Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN vulnerability added 14-MAY with 17-MAY mitigation deadline), an active Mid-South tornado outbreak window per SPC Day 1, and Hamvention 15-17 MAY drawing significant ham radio practitioner attention away from operational watch posture. Practitioners should treat this weekend as a real-world combined-effects exercise: HF degraded through Sunday, satellite and L-band MSS as resilient bearers, NWR rolling outages across multiple WFOs from AWIPS updates, and a non-trivial probability that any cyber incident this weekend will be discovered with reduced HF backup capability and reduced practitioner attention. Recommended: brief served-agency partners that this weekend is a higher-than-baseline operational risk window across multiple domains, and that no single backup bearer should be considered authoritative.

MONITORING PRIORITIES FOR COMING WEEK

- SWPC G2 storm 15-17 MAY — monitor recovery into early next week. Watch for any additional CME activity in the trailing solar rotation. HF should recover to NORMAL by Tuesday 19-MAY barring follow-on events. Verify ARES/RACES net check-in rates and address any propagation-driven gaps before next exercise cycle.
- AST SpaceMobile BlueBird 8, 9, 10 launch on Falcon 9 — expected mid-June 2026 per AST 11-MAY 8-K. This is the single most important commercial-space milestone for first-responder satellite connectivity in 2026. Successful deployment moves FirstNet satellite beta from speculative to credibly on-track for late-2026 enrollment.
- SCOTUS FCC v. AT&T / Verizon v. FCC — decision expected by end of June 2026. Oral argument 21-APR showed the Court skeptical of limiting the FCC, with Chief Justice Roberts characterizing the dispute as a "PR problem" and Justice Kavanaugh observing carriers "won on the law going forward." A ruling preserving current FCC enforcement authority would stabilize the regulatory enforcement track for at least the remainder of 2026.
- CISA KEV catalog — daily check for new entries. This cycle added CVE-2026-20182 (Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN CVSS 10.0, due 17-MAY), CVE-2026-31431 (Linux Kernel, 01-MAY), CVE-2024-1708 (ConnectWise) and CVE-2026-32202 (Windows) on 28-APR, plus 4 SimpleHelp/Samsung/D-Link entries 18-APR. Reuters reports CISA is evaluating shortening FCEB KEV remediation deadlines to as little as 3 days for high-CVSS items — if adopted, this is a material operational change for FCEB-aligned organizations.
- AA26-097A Iranian APT campaign — Day 39 and active. Audit any Rockwell/Allen-Bradley PLCs in your facility or supply chain for direct internet exposure and default credentials. CISA reports 5,219+ exposed Rockwell PLCs globally, 74.6% in the United States. Coordinate with OT/ICS engineering for compensating controls if air-gap is not feasible.
- Hormuz GNSS — sustained spoofing post-Epic-Fury. Monitor GPSJam.org for geographic expansion or any CONUS-GPS anomaly signature. Bloomberg reports tanker crews now navigating on radar only with GPS unreliable; aviation operators in the region should brief on inertial navigation backup procedures.

- TeleGeography / operator announcements — any further Gulf corridor cable fault, install delay, or repair-window denial. 04-MAY report confirms 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 Gulf installs delayed by Iran war; watch for restart announcements as a leading indicator of regional stabilization.
- FCC NG911 reliability FNPRM — final rules expected late summer 2026. State 911 authorities and PSAPs should inventory C9SP relationships now, as the expanded definition will capture IP-era providers that did not previously consider themselves C9SPs. The 14-JAN-2026 Verizon 10-hour outage remains under FCC inquiry and will likely shape the final rule.

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