

# Emergency Alerts national test to take place on Sunday 23 April



The UK government's new Emergency Alerts system is now live. The system will enable people to be contacted via their mobile phone when lives are in danger.

It will be used to warn you in the event of emergencies, such as severe flooding.

**[There will be a national test of the UK Emergency Alerts System on Sunday 23 April.](#)**

Emergency Alerts are sent to all compatible 4G and 5G mobile phones within an area of risk. They don't track your location, need your phone number, or collect personal data. Only the government and the emergency services will be able to send them. They will be just one of the ways the Government communicates with the public about emergency situations, so if you don't have a mobile phone, don't worry – you'll still be made aware through the media and local emergency services.

An Emergency Alert looks and sounds very different to other types of messages such as SMS 'text messages'. You'll know if you get an Emergency Alert because you'll hear a loud siren-like sound and your phone will use a distinct vibration. A message on your screen will tell you about the emergency and what you need to do.

Depending on your phone's features, the alert will work with screen magnification and may read the message out for you having also overridden volume settings. The unique noise emitted by the phone should also be audible for those who use a hearing aid.

You'll be able to check an alert is genuine at [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts)

If you receive an alert, read the alert carefully and follow the instructions. To find out more about Emergency Alerts, [visit gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts)

## **What are Emergency Alerts?**

The new Emergency Alerts service is now live. The system will enable people to be contacted via their mobile phone if their lives are at risk in an emergency. The service will be used to warn you about life-threatening emergencies such as severe flooding.

## **What will the alert look and sound like?**

An Emergency Alert looks and sounds very different to other types of messages such as SMS 'text messages'. You'll know if you get an Emergency Alert because you'll hear a loud, siren-like sound and your phone will use a distinct vibration. A message will appear on your screen until you acknowledge it.

## **Can I opt out?**

Emergency Alerts use several channels and the ability to opt in or out is determined by the channel type. However, we strongly recommend that people do not opt out of the service, as it is intended to warn you when lives are in danger. Visit [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts) for more information.

## **How can I find an Emergency Alert on my phone after I've acknowledged it?**

If you received an Emergency Alert on a compatible phone, you may still be able to view it on your phone after you have acknowledged it. On Android phones, the alert may be found in the Messages app or 'Emergency Alert History'. For iPhone users, the alert will be in your notifications. You can access your notifications by swiping down from the top of your screen. If you delete your notifications, the alert will also be deleted.

## **How do they work?**

Emergency Alerts are sent to compatible 4G and 5G mobile phones within an area of risk. They don't need your location or phone number. Only the government and emergency services can send them.

## **Will I still receive an alert if I have an old phone?**

Emergency Alerts are sent to compatible 4G and 5G mobile phones within an area of risk, if they have the latest software update. Mobile phones released before 2015 are likely to require some changes to the settings.

## **Is my privacy and security protected?**

Yes: Emergency Alerts require no personal information (such as telephone number, identity or location). The technology used allows a message to be broadcast to a defined area, meaning any compatible device in or entering that area immediately receives the message. Emergency alerts are therefore one-way and do not provide any feedback on the recipients' location or whether they have received an alert. The recipients' telephone numbers and specific locations are not required, known or used, and no personal information on recipients of Emergency Alerts is shared by the Mobile Network Operators and no personal information is gathered by the government or the Mobile Network Operators.

## **Will alerts sent to my mobile phone tell authorities where I am or be used to gather data about me?**

No – Emergency Alerts are one-way and do not provide any feedback on your location or whether you have received an Emergency Alert. No data is being gathered about you, your phone or your location. No personal information is gathered by the government or the Mobile Network Operators on recipients of Emergency Alerts.

## **I am a domestic abuse victim and need to conceal my phone. How can I stop it from going off?**

It is possible to opt out of the system if you need your phone to stay concealed. Visit [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts) for more information.

## **What is the difference between SMS and Emergency Alerts?**

After the alert is sent by the government or emergency services, the message will be received on a mobile phone within about 4 to 10 seconds. In comparison, the delivery of SMS messages can take up to 48hrs. This is critical in emergencies. Emergency Alerts are one-way and no personal information is required, whereas an SMS message requires a phone number.

## **How will I know that the alert is genuine and not a scam?**

An Emergency Alert looks and sounds very different to other types of messages such as SMS 'text messages'. You'll know if you get an Emergency Alert because you'll hear a loud, siren-like sound and your phone will use a distinct vibration. You have to acknowledge them before you can use your phone's other features. They appear as a notification and will include a link to [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts), where you'll also be able to check that an alert is genuine. If you receive an alert but are still in doubt about the origins of the message, go to [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts) or contact neighbours, friends or family in the nearby area to check whether they have received it too.

## **What other ways will you use to alert people of an emergency?**

Emergency Alerts are just one of many tools the government has to communicate with the public about emergency situations, e.g. through the media, community organisations and local emergency services.

Each region across the country also has a Local Resilience Forum in place, made up of local authorities, the emergency services, the NHS & health bodies and environment-related government agencies, set up to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency. Local Resilience Forums work with partners in a local area to alert people of an emergency.

## **How frequently might I get them?**

The likelihood of receiving a message in any given year is low. The most frequent use is expected to be for flooding.

## **What happens if I get the Emergency Alert while driving?**

You must not hold a mobile phone while driving or riding a motorcycle. It is illegal to do so. If you receive an alert while driving, do not pick up your phone and attempt to deal with the message. Continue driving as normal, staying in full control of your vehicle. If you feel the need to look at your phone, you must find a safe and legal place to pull over first.

## **What will the test alert say?**

It will say:

*"This is a test of Emergency Alerts, a new UK government service that will warn you if there's a life-threatening emergency nearby.*

*"In an actual emergency, follow the instructions in the alert to keep yourself and others safe.*

*"Visit [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts) for more information.*

*"This is a test. You do not need to take any action."*