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Emergency Mobile Alert frequently asked questions (FAQ)

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Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3

Omissions and alterations

Some page layouts have been edited for clarity.

Emergency Mobile Alert frequently asked questions (FAQ)

We've compiled helpful answers to frequently asked questions about Emergency Mobile Alert.

About Emergency Mobile Alert

What is Emergency Mobile Alert?

Emergency Mobile Alert is a way of receiving information about emergencies in your area. If your life, health or property is in danger, Emergency Mobile Alerts can be sent to your mobile. You don't need to sign up or download an app.

Emergency Mobile Alert is broadcast to all capable phones from targeted cell towers. The alerts will be targeted to areas affected by serious hazards.

You don't have to download an app or subscribe to a service. Just ensure your phone is capable and the operating system software is up to date. If your phone is on, capable and inside the targeted location, you should get the alerts.

If you get an alert, read the message and take it seriously. It will tell you what the emergency is and what to do. It will

also tell you which agency sent the message and, if needed, where to go for more information.

Who sends Emergency Mobile Alerts?

Only authorised emergency agencies can send Emergency Mobile Alerts. Agencies will only send alerts when there is a serious threat to life, health or property. Agencies may also send scheduled test alerts.

The only agencies currently authorised to issue alerts are:

- New Zealand Police
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- National Emergency Management Agency
- Local Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups.

The alert message will identify the agency sending the Emergency Mobile Alert.

What will Emergency Mobile Alert be used for?

Emergency Mobile Alert is designed to help keep people safe if there is an emergency. The alerts will only be sent when there are serious threats to life, health or property, and, in some cases, for test purposes.

For example, Emergency Mobile Alert may be used to warn you of serious threats such as:

- a tsunami affecting land
- areas a wildfire affecting people
- armed offenders at large, or
- seriously contaminated drinking water.

Emergency Mobile Alerts will not be used for advertising or promotions.

Why don't you text me instead?

Emergency Mobile Alert was chosen as it is reliable in an emergency. Emergency Mobile Alert uses a dedicated signal. It is not affected by network congestion.

Unlike text messages, Emergency Mobile Alert is secure and doesn't need private details of recipients.

Emergency Mobile Alert is free and easy to access—there is no need to download an app or subscribe to a service. We expect most new phones sold by New Zealand mobile network operators will be capable of receiving Emergency Mobile Alerts.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert replace other warnings?

No. Emergency Mobile Alerts are not meant to replace other emergency alerts, or the need to take action after natural warnings.

You still need to prepare for an emergency and you should not wait to get an alert before you act. If you feel your life is

in danger, don't wait for an official warning. Take immediate action.

Make sure you have your own emergency plan that includes:

- what to do
- where to go
- who to go to for help, and
- who you might need to look out for.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert be used to gather data about me?

No. The Emergency Mobile Alert system is only used to broadcast messages. Emergency Mobile Alert does not use your mobile phone number. It is impossible for Emergency Mobile Alert to collect information about you, your cell phone use or your location.

Troubleshooting

Why did I not receive an Emergency Mobile Alert message?

There are many reasons you may not receive an Emergency Mobile Alert message. For this reason, we encourage everyone to rely on a number of different ways to stay informed.

Check your phone is Emergency Mobile Alert capable and up to date.

Other possible reasons for not receiving the alert may include your phone being:

- off
- in flight mode, or
- out of cellular coverage.

Why did my phone receive an alert multiple times?

If your phone moved from a 3G to a 4G network during the time of the broadcast, you will have received an alert from both networks. The same thing would have happened if you turned flight mode on and off. Or turned your phone off and back on during the broadcast period.

Some phones have an optional alert reminder feature turned on. This can cause the phone to alarm repeatedly during the broadcast. If your phone has an alert reminder, you can find it in the Wireless Alerts/Broadcast Alerts/Emergency Alerts settings—any of these names may be used.

My Emergency Mobile Alert message disappeared. Where can I find it?

If you received an Emergency Mobile Alert, it may still be viewable on your phone.

For Android phones

Although each Android phone is different, emergency alerts are generally found in your "Messages" app.

For example:

1. Go to Messages app
2. Find the menu (...) and select "settings".
3. Select "Emergency alert history".

For Apple phones

For iPhone users, the alert will be in your notifications. Access your notifications by swiping down from the top of your screen. If you delete your notifications, you will also delete the alert.

Why did the alert say Presidential Alert?

The Emergency Mobile Alert system uses an international standard. The broadcast channel we use is often called Presidential Alert overseas.

We have worked with the phone manufacturers and New Zealand mobile network operators to use the term Emergency Alert instead. However, some phones pre-dating this, or bought overseas, will use the American international standard and will display Presidential Alert.

Receiving an Emergency Mobile Alert

How can I make sure I get an Emergency Mobile Alert?

To get Emergency Mobile Alerts you need a phone capable of receiving them. The phone also needs to have cell reception and up-to-date software. You don't have to download an app or subscribe to a service.

1. Check if your phone is on the list of capable phones.
2. Update your phone's operating system software.

Please refer to your phone manual or talk to your mobile operator if you need help updating your phone.

We expect most phones will be able to receive the alerts. And we expect there to be more capable phones over time.

Can I opt out of getting Emergency Mobile Alerts?

As Emergency Mobile Alert is about keeping you safe, you won't be able to opt out of receiving Emergency Mobile Alert.

We do not target specific phones, instead we broadcast to a targeted area that is at risk. For this reason we are unable to exclude your specific phone. Emergency Mobile Alert does not use your mobile phone number or collect information about you.

Your phone may show optional settings used in other countries, but in New Zealand we will use a special broadcast channel that is permanently on.

What if my phone isn't capable of receiving Emergency Mobile Alert?

Emergency Mobile Alert does not replace other emergency alerts.

Emergency Mobile Alert is an additional channel to help keep people safe in an emergency. It does not replace other alerting systems or the need to take action after natural warnings.

You should still be prepared for an emergency, and you shouldn't wait to get an alert before you act. If you feel your life is in danger, don't wait for an official warning. Take immediate action.

Take the time to make your own emergency plan that includes:

- what to do,
- where to go
- who to go to for help, and
- who you might need to look out for.

Get in touch with your local Civil Defence Emergency Management Group to find out about other alerting systems in your area.

Can I reply to Emergency Mobile Alert messages?

No, you will not be able to respond to the message or contact emergency services through this system. In an emergency please call 111.

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Where can I buy an Emergency Mobile Alert capable phone?

If buying a new phone, look for the Emergency Mobile Alert Identification Mark. You can also check with your mobile service provider.

I don't have a smart phone. Will my phone be able to get Emergency Mobile Alerts?

Emergency Mobile Alerts will not be available on all phones immediately. Over time we expect more phones to be Emergency Mobile Alert capable.

We expect the number of Emergency Mobile Alert capable phones to increase over time. We expect most new phones sold by New Zealand mobile network operators will be capable of receiving Emergency Mobile Alerts.

Will Emergency Mobile Alerts go to my landline or satellite phone?

No. Emergency Mobile Alert uses the New Zealand mobile networks. Alerts can only be broadcast to mobile phones capable of receiving them.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert work everywhere in NZ?

Emergency Mobile Alert should work in areas with cell reception. About 97% of populated areas get cell reception. Mobile service providers work to improve mobile coverage all the time.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert work if cell phone towers are damaged, or if there is a power outage?

Emergency Mobile Alert may not work if mobile phone towers are damaged or if there is a power outage. For this reason, you must also rely on other information sources.

Emergency Mobile Alert is only one way of finding out about serious threats. Make sure you have an emergency plan and know where to find more information during an emergency.

What should I do if I'm driving when I receive an Emergency Mobile Alert?

You should pull over and check the message as soon as it is safe to do so. If you have a passenger, ask them to read the alert immediately. Do not attempt to read the alert while driving.

Does Emergency Mobile Alert have a cost?

Receiving Emergency Mobile Alerts is free. There is no cost to you. You don't have to download an app or subscribe to a service.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert phones be more expensive?

No. Phones capable of receiving Emergency Mobile Alerts should not be more expensive because of this feature.

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What languages will Emergency Mobile Alert be broadcast in?

At this stage Emergency Mobile Alerts are only available in English.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert be accessible for sight and hearing impaired people?

The accessibility of Emergency Mobile Alerts will vary depending on the make and model of your mobile phone.

Will Emergency Mobile Alert work using Sure Signal?

No. Emergency Mobile Alert will not be broadcast to phones connected to a Sure Signal device.

Nationwide tests

When is the next nationwide test of Emergency Mobile Alert?

In consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 nationwide test of the Emergency Mobile Alert system was cancelled. The 2021 nationwide test of Emergency Mobile Alert has not yet been scheduled.

Testing is a necessary part of making sure the Emergency Mobile Alert system works well.

The previous nationwide tests were sent to cell towers all over New Zealand. We expect approximately four million phones were capable of receiving the alert.

The tests allowed us to check the system, cell towers and your phone's ability to receive the alert.

1.2.8 How can I prevent receiving the Emergency Mobile Alert test alert?

If you do not want to be disturbed, please turn your phone off or switch it to Flight Mode during the test period.

Your phone needs to have an active connection to the mobile network. You won't receive the Emergency Mobile Alert if your phone is off or in Flight Mode.

Emergency Mobile Alert may override Do Not Disturb and Silent Modes.