

Emergency Alerts Stakeholder Guidance



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Introduction

Emergency Alerts is a new mobile phone service being trialled by the UK government.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the Emergency Alerts system, including:

- How it will work during the trial now the system is live;
- When alert messages will be sent;
- How to confirm an alert is authentic;
- How to opt out of receiving alerts.



How emergency alerts work

Emergency alerts work like a radio broadcast.

In an emergency, mobile phone masts in the affected areas will broadcast an alert. Every compatible mobile phone or tablet in range of a mast will receive the alert. This enables alerts to be targeted at a specific area or region of the country by selecting specific masts in a given geographical area to broadcast it.

There will always be a degree of “bleed” beyond the target area depending on the position of the mast, the geography and weather conditions.



Compatible devices

Most 4G and 5G devices released since 2015 are compatible with the emergency alerts system.

Emergency alerts work on:

- iPhones running iOS 14.5 or later
- Android phones and tablets running Android 11 or later

If you have an earlier version of Android, you may still be able to receive alerts. To check, search your device settings for 'emergency alerts'.



Getting an emergency alert

An Emergency Alert will look and sound different to other types of mobile phone messages.

When you get an Emergency Alert you will hear a loud, siren-like sound and your phone will use a distinct vibration. A message will appear on your screen and will remain there until you acknowledge it. You will not get alerts if your device is turned off or in aeroplane mode.

If you're driving, riding or operating machinery when you get an alert, you should find somewhere safe to stop or stop using the machine before using your phone or tablet.



Emergency alerts in Scotland

The UK Government has funded and owns the system.

The focus for the Scottish Government during the trial is on developing the processes and procedures to make it work effectively in Scotland.

The UK-wide trial will run until the end of June 2023 and in Scotland alerts will only be issued for very severe weather emergencies – for example when it affects a large geographical or heavily populated area or where already challenging conditions are expected to suddenly deteriorate.



Test Message

On Sunday 23 April 2023 there will be a national test of the Emergency Alerts service .

The alert will be clearly marked as a test and no further action will be required other than to switch the alert off once it is received.



Security and authenticity

Emergency alerts will only be sent in Scotland by the emergency services and Scottish Government.

Alerts are sent to mobile phones based on geographical location.

No data about you, your phone or your location is needed and no data will be collected or shared.



Opting out of alerts

You can opt out of emergency alerts, but it is recommended that you keep them switched on for your own safety.

To opt out:

- a. Search your settings for 'emergency alerts'.
- b. Turn off 'severe alerts' and 'extreme alerts'.

If you still get alerts, contact your device manufacturer for help.



Further information

For more information on the Emergency Alerts service please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/alerts>.

