**Emergency Alerts Q&A**

**What are Emergency Alerts?**

The new Emergency Alerts service will be live from March 19, and you should expect to receive a test message on that day. 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.

**Opt Out iPhone:**

* To opt out, search your settings for ‘emergency alerts’ and turn off Severe alerts and Emergency alerts.
* If this does not work, contact your device manufacturer.
* For further advice go to gov.uk/alerts/opt-out

**Opt Out Android phones and tablets:**

* To opt out, search your settings for ‘emergency alerts’ and turn off Severe alerts and Emergency alerts.
* On Huawei devices running EMUI 11 or older, search your settings for ‘emergency alerts’ and please turn off “Extreme threats”, “Severe threats” and “Show amber alerts”
* If this does not work, contact your device manufacturer

**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.

**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, 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 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.

**What languages will messages be broadcast in?**

The primary language will be English. Sending dual language English/Welsh messages is also possible for alerts in Wales. We will continue to investigate the use of the technology for messages sent in other languages to increase the effectiveness and reach of the service.

**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 are test alerts?**

To ensure the Emergency Alerts system works effectively, the government may occasionally carry out a test of the service.

**I am visually or hearing impaired, will I know when I receive an Emergency Alert?**

Yes. Emergency Alerts are designed to attract attention. This means 4G/5G capable devices (for criteria see above) use a loud, siren-like sound so people with visual impairments are not excluded. Some phones will also read out the message and can override volume settings. Emergency Alerts also use a distinct vibration type. Testing with users who have hearing aids demonstrated that the reserved tone is pronounced for those individuals in a unique way. For those with visual impairments screen magnification will also facilitate reading an Emergency Alert.

**I work with/am a parent of /am a carer of a person who may be distressed by this type of alert. How has this been taken into consideration?**

As part of the public information campaign, the Government is working closely with stakeholders to ensure that the communities and people who are more likely to be distressed by this type of alert are made aware of the Emergency Alert service. If you can, we also advise you to identify vulnerable people living nearby who you can inform of the service.

Those who are vulnerable can also be directed to the website (gov.uk/alerts) for more information about Emergency Alerts, including what happens when you get an alert, reasons you might receive one and how it works. There is also an explainer video they can watch to find out more.

**Will this new service disadvantage some individuals or groups?**

Emergency Alerts are just one of many tools the Government has to communicate with the public about emergency situations. The service will be one source of information in the event of a life-threatening emergency. Existing procedures will still be in place- for example those without a mobile will still be made aware through the news and local emergency services.

As part of the public information campaign, the Government is working closely with stakeholders to ensure that those communities and people who are less likely to have a mobile will be able to access the information distributed through the alerts. We advise you to identify someone who lives near you who can inform you of any Emergency Alerts being sent.

For more information on the Emergency Alerts service please visit: **https://www.gov.uk/alerts.**