

What is an emergency alert?

An emergency alert is a free service being launched by the UK Government that will warn you about serious nearby threats to life through your mobile phone or device.

There will be a National Test Message of the system on Sunday 23 April 2023.

What will an emergency alert look like?

Emergency Alerts will appear on your device and you will hear a loud siren-like sound for up to 10 seconds. It will appear on your device's home screen and you must acknowledge it before you can use other features. They appear as a notification and may include telephone numbers or website links containing further information. A loud, siren-like sound and vibration will accompany the message to raise awareness of the hazard or threat.

What shall I do when I receive the National Test Message on 23 April?

When you receive the Welcome Message you do not need to take any action. The siren will stop automatically after ten seconds. A welcome message will stay on screen until you acknowledge it, just like a 'low battery' warning.

What will emergency alerts be used for?

Emergency alerts will be used to inform people about severe threats to life in particular areas, such as flooding or wildfires.

Are emergency alerts free?

Emergency alerts are a free service provided by the UK Government.

Will people living in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland receive emergency alerts?

People living in all parts of the UK will be able to receive emergency alerts.

What should I do if I receive a real emergency alert?

When you get an alert, stop what you're doing (when it is safe to do so) and follow the instructions in the alert. If you are driving, as when receiving any phone call or message, do not look at or touch your phone until it is safe to do so.

Will the Government use emergency alerts to spam me?

No. Emergency alerts will only be used to warn you about an immediate threat to life.

Does the Government use my personal data to send an emergency alert?

No. The system uses the cell tower your phone is connected to. When an alert is triggered, all towers in the area will broadcast the alert. To do this the Government does not need to know the specific location or personal data on your device.

Will I still receive emergency alerts if I don't have a smartphone?

Emergency alerts work on all 4G and 5G phone networks widely used by smartphones. This will not include older 'non-smart' phones but the 3G technology that they use is being switched off next year. If you do not have a compatible device, you'll still be informed about an emergency as the emergency services have other ways to warn you when there is a threat to life.

What happens if I receive an emergency alert when I am driving?

You should not read or respond to an emergency alert when you are driving or riding a vehicle. Find somewhere safe and legal to stop before picking up your phone and reading the message. If there is nowhere safe or legal to stop close by, and nobody else is in the vehicle to read the alert, tune into live radio for information until you can find somewhere safe and legal to stop.

Will emergency alerts affect my battery life?

No. Neither emergency alerts nor having the ability to receive them will impact your phone's battery life.

How can I unsubscribe from emergency alerts?

You can opt out of the emergency alerts system in your phone's settings, just search for "emergency alerts", and turn off 'severe alerts' and 'extreme alerts'. You will not receive alerts if your device is turned off or in airplane mode. However, these alerts are potentially life-saving so we recommend you keep them switched on.