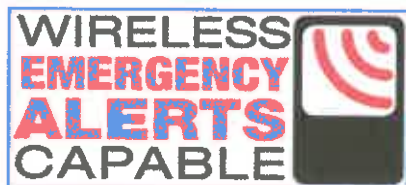




Weather warnings on the go!



Imagine this: You're driving down the highway, humming along to your favorite tunes, when the cell phone stowed in your bag suddenly makes a strange noise. To investigate, you take the next exit and safely pull over to check the screen. Good thing you did: Your phone just alerted you to a tornado a few miles away in same county you're driving through.

Sound plausible? It is. America's wireless industry is helping to build a Weather-Ready Nation through a nationwide text emergency alert system, called Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), which will warn you when weather threatens. [Read the rest of the article on NOAA.gov.](#)



Other Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are WEA messages?

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through your mobile carrier. Government partners include local and state public safety agencies, FEMA, the FCC, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Weather Service.

2. Why is this important to me?

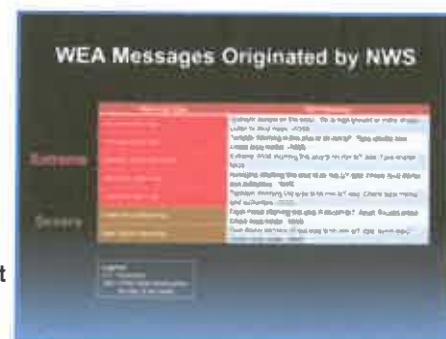
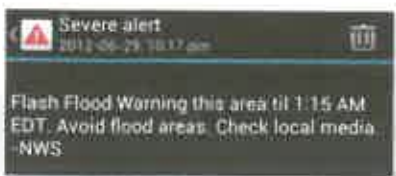
Alerts received at the right time can help keep you safe during an emergency. With WEA, alerts can be sent to your mobile device when you may be in harm's way, without need to download an app or subscribe to a service.

3. What types of alerts will I receive?

- Extreme weather warnings
- Local emergencies requiring evacuation or immediate action
- AMBER Alerts
- Presidential Alerts during a national emergency

4. What does a WEA message look like?

WEA will look like a text message. The WEA message will typically show the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, and the agency issuing the alert. The message will be no more than 90 characters.



5. How will I know the difference between WEA and a regular text message?

WEA messages include a special tone and vibration, both repeated twice.

6. What types of WEA messages will the National Weather Service send?

- Tsunami Warnings ([see Fact Sheet](#))



Example of a Wireless Emergency Alert on an iPhone 5 (AT&T).

- Tornado and Flash Flood Warnings
- Hurricane, Typhoon, Dust Storm and Extreme Wind Warnings

7. What should I do when I receive a WEA message?

Follow any action advised by the emergency message. Seek more details from your favorite TV or radio station, NOAA Weather Radio, news website, desktop application, mobile application, or other trusted source of information.

8. Will I receive a WEA message if I'm visiting an area where I don't live, or outside the area where my phone is registered?

Yes, if you have a WEA-capable phone and your wireless carrier participates in the program. For information about which mobile devices are WEA-capable and carrier participation, please visit <http://www.ctia.org/wea> or contact your wireless carrier.

9. What if I travel into a threat area after a WEA message is already sent?

If you travel into a threat area after an alert is first sent, your WEA-capable device will receive the message when you enter the area.

10. When will I start receiving WEA messages from the NWS?

The NWS began participation in the WEA service in late June 2012. Some mobile devices, especially older ones, are not WEA-capable. When you buy a new mobile device, it probably will be able to receive WEA messages. For more details on WEA, including links to your wireless service providers' unique WEA service information, please visit: www.ctia.org/wea.

11. Is this the same service public safety agencies have asked the public to register for?

No, but they are complementary. Local agencies may have asked you to sign up to receive telephone calls, text messages, or emails. Those messages often include specific details about a critical event. WEA are very short messages designed to get your attention in an emergency situation. They may not give all the details you receive from other notification services.

12. Will I be charged for receiving WEA messages?

No. This service is offered for free by wireless carriers. WEA messages will not count towards texting limits on your wireless plan.

13. Does WEA know where I am? Is it tracking me?

No. WEA use radio technology to broadcast the alert from cell towers to mobile devices in the area of the threat. Therefore, WEA doesn't know exactly who is tuned in.

14. Will a WEA message interrupt my phone conversations?

No, the alert will be delayed until you finish your call.

15. How often will I receive WEA messages?

You may receive frequent WEA messages during an emergency. Message frequency depends on the number of imminent threats to life or property in your area.

16. If, during an emergency, I can't make or receive calls or text messages due to network congestion, will I still be able to receive a WEA message?

Yes, WEA messages are not affected by network congestion.

17. What if I don't want to receive WEA messages?



You can opt-out of receiving WEA messages for imminent threats and AMBER alerts, but not for Presidential messages. To opt out, please refer to instructions from your wireless carrier or visit <http://www.ctia.org/wea> for more information.

Some cell phones allow the users to opt-in and opt-out directly on their devices. These devices differentiate the imminent threat alerts into two categories - "Extreme alerts" and "Severe alerts" as shown in the image below.

The Extreme alerts from the National Weather Service include warnings for tsunamis, tornadoes, extreme winds, hurricanes and typhoons. The Severe alerts from National Weather Service include warnings for flash floods and dust storms. For example, by keeping Extreme alert selected and de-selecting Severe alert, the user would still be capable of receiving Extreme alerts, but would not receive Severe alerts on their cell phone.

18. Why did I receive an alert when there was no warning in effect for my location?

WEA messages are broadcast using radio-like technology from cell towers in, and sometimes around, the actual warning area.

Therefore, an alert can reach cell phones outside of the actual warning area depending on the broadcast range of the cell towers which broadcast the alert. This overreach is typically more prevalent in rural areas than in more densely populated cities.

19. How will I receive alerts if I don't have a WEA-capable device?

WEA is one of many ways you can receive emergency notifications. Other sources include NOAA Weather Radio, news media coverage, the Emergency Alert System on radio and TV broadcasts, desktop applications, mobile applications, and other alerting methods offered by local and state public safety agencies. Your best use of WEA is to immediately seek additional information about the imminent threat impacting your area.

20. How do I let my friends and family know how Wireless Emergency Alerts work?

FEMA has produced [Public Service Announcements](#) that demonstrate how wireless alerts save lives. These short videos are available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded and shared with others. And check out [real stories](#) of how WEA has saved lives and livelihoods.



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