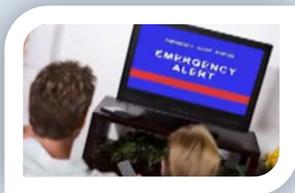




Overview for the American Public

Local police and fire departments, emergency managers, the National Weather Service (NWS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and private industry are working together to make sure you can receive alerts and warnings quickly through several different technologies no matter where you are—at home, at school, at work, or even on vacation.

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) uses different pathways to simultaneously send alerts through many different channels:



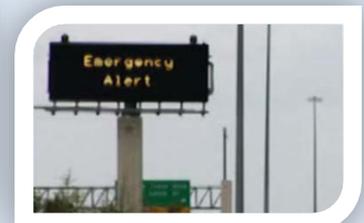
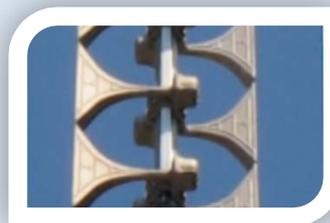
Televisions and radios receive alerts through the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

Cell phones receive Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA).



Internet applications are able to receive alerts through the All-Hazards Information Feed.

Road signs, sirens, and other local systems can be made IPAWS-compliant.



To send an alert through IPAWS, a public safety official must complete FEMA-sponsored training and coordinate alerting permissions with their state government. The National Weather Service uses IPAWS to send alerts for: tornadoes, flash floods, hurricanes, extreme wind, blizzards and ice storms, tsunamis, and dust storms.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) allow public safety officials to send warnings directly to cell phones and other mobile devices in affected areas. These short messages look like text messages, but unlike texts, which are sent directly to your phone number, these warnings will be broadcast to all phones within range of designated cell towers. The alerts will tell you the type of warning, the affected area, and the duration. You'll need to turn to other sources, such as television or radio, to get more detailed information about what is happening and what actions you should take.

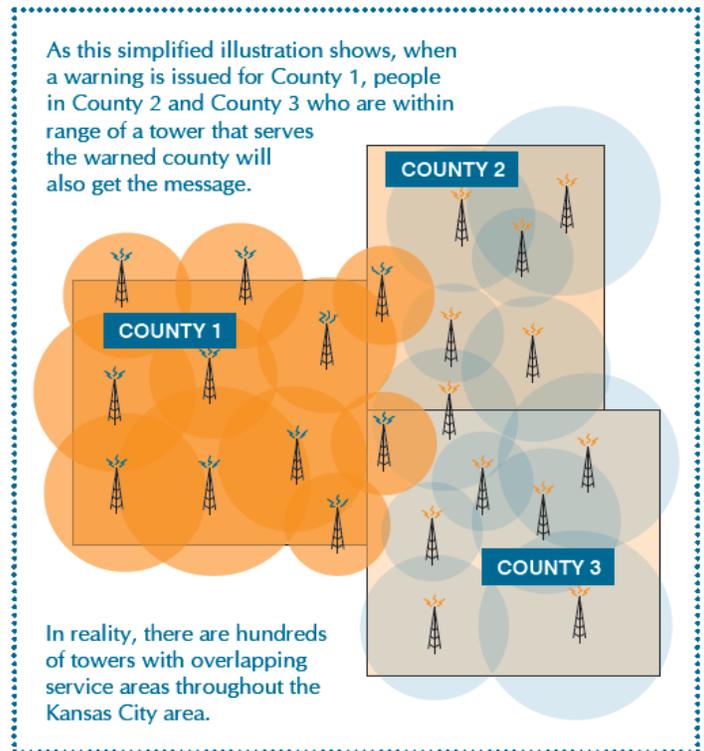


For illustration only. Actual message appearance will vary.

If you have an older model phone, you may not receive Wireless Emergency Alerts. Some, such as newer-model iPhone and Android phones, are receiving software updates that add this feature. AT&T, Cricket, Sprint, T-Mobile and

Verizon all have information about the new alert system and lists of WEA-capable phones on their websites. For additional information about service on your device in your area, contact your cellular service provider.

Because cell towers broadcast in a radius, or circle, their coverage areas don't line up neatly with county boundaries. This means you may receive warnings for an adjacent county if you're within a few miles of the border. The alerts are delivered directly from cell tower to cell phone through a one-way broadcast. Unfortunately, in some cases, this may result in overwarning. For example, if a tornado warning is issued for a particular county, it will go to all towers that serve that county. Towers in urban areas generally serve a radius of two to five miles, and in rural areas up to 10 miles, so the warning message may reach a little beyond the warning boundaries.



Images courtesy of the National Weather Service

Key Things to Know:

- WEA messages may look like a text, but use a technology which avoids network congestion.
- The WEA message includes a unique ringtone and vibration.
- You will never be charged for WEA messages.
- Emergency alerts will not interrupt any calls in progress. If you're on the phone when the alert goes out, you'll get the message when you end your call.
- You do not need to have GPS or any other special features turned on to receive the alerts.
- The system does not identify your location or phone number – it simply sends the message to all devices in a given area.
- If you're on the road and enter an area with an active warning, you'll receive a WEA message as soon as you come within range of one of the affected cell towers.
- WEA messages will be one of three types:
 - IMMEDIATE THREAT ALERTS – Severe weather or other urgent danger as determined by local public safety officials.
 - AMBER ALERTS – Issued by law enforcement with information about a child abduction.
 - PRESIDENTIAL ALERTS – Issued by the U.S. President in the event of a national emergency.
- You may choose to opt out of Immediate Threat and AMBER alerts.

For more information: <http://www.fema.gov/ipaws>

To contact the IPAWS Program Management Office: ipaws@fema.dhs.gov