

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is Emergency Alert?

Emergency Alert is the national telephone warning system used by emergency service organisations. The system sends warning messages to landline and mobile telephones within a geographical area, about likely or actual emergencies such as fire, flood, or extreme weather events.

2. When is Emergency Alert used?

Once the decision to warn a community is made, the responsible emergency service organisation will determine the geographical area to be warned. The emergency service organisation will decide how to send out the warnings, such as radio, website or television, depending on the nature of the emergency. It will also decide if a telephone warning needs to be issued.

Emergency Alert is just one way emergency service organisations can warn a community and will not be used in all circumstances. You should be adequately prepared in the event of an emergency, continue to use a range of information sources and stay aware of local conditions. You should not wait to receive a warning message before you act.

3. How does Emergency Alert work for landlines?

Emergency Alert issues a recorded voice message to landline telephones within a geographical area. If the call is unanswered, the landline is retried once.

4. How does Emergency Alert work for mobile telephones?

There are two ways Emergency Alert works for mobile telephones within a geographical area affected by an emergency:

- a text message is sent based on the registered service address of the mobile telephone.
- a text message is sent based on the last known location of the handset at the time of the emergency. This includes visitors and people travelling in the area.

Based on how mobile telephone coverage works, you may receive a text message if you are outside the area of risk but you are nearby that area. It is important that you read the message carefully and understand what action you may need to take.

5. Why didn't I get the warning message on my landline telephone?

You may not have received the recorded voice message on your landline telephone for a number of reasons

- your telephone was engaged
- you did not answer the call
- there was a power outage and your landline telephone is a cordless phone
- your landline telephone was outside the warning area.



6. Why didn't I get the text warning message on my mobile telephone?

You may not have received the text message on your mobile telephone for a number of reasons:

- your text message inbox was full
- the emergency services chose other mediums to warn people that may be in the affected area at the time of the emergency
- your mobile telephone was switched off or was not in a mobile telephone coverage area
- the last known location of your handset was not within the warning area at the time of the emergency
- you have not updated your registered service address.

7. What if I travel into a warning area after a warning message is sent?

You will not receive the text message. You will only receive a text message if a new warning message is issued and your handset is active in the warning area.

8. Does Emergency Alert know where I am? Is it tracking me?

No. Emergency Alert does not track your location, as it does not hold location data of individual mobile telephone numbers.

9. What happens if I am living or travelling in a mobile telephone blackspot?

Emergency Alert is just one way emergency services may use to warn people that may be in the affected area at the time of the emergency.

Emergency services can use Emergency Alert to send voice message to landlines. If you are living in a mobile telephone blackspot, ensure you have a landline telephone that is not reliant on electricity. You can also seek advice from your service provider about options to improve your telephone coverage.

Whether you are living or travelling in a mobile telephone blackspot, it is important not to rely on receiving a warning message on your mobile telephone.

People should be adequately prepared in the event of an emergency, continue to use a range of information sources – such as radio and television - and stay aware of local conditions. You should not wait to receive a warning message before you act.

10. Will warning messages be in languages other than English?

No. Voice and text warning messages are in English.

Members of the community are encouraged to discuss emergency preparedness with family, friends and neighbours who do not speak English, so they are able to act if they receive a warning message.

11. What will the warning message say?

The warning message may include information on the emergency, what action to take and where to find further information.

12. How do I know the warning message is authentic or genuine?

The caller ID number or message header on your telephone displays the number '0444 444 444'. Recorded voice messages sent to landlines may begin with the Standard Emergency Warning Signal.

13. Where can I get more information about Emergency Alert system?

More information about the national Emergency Alert telephone warning system is available from www.emergencyalert.gov.au

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