

Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) 2023 National Test FAQs

What is the purpose of the national test?

The national test will help ensure that Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS) continue to be effective ways to warn the public about emergencies, particularly those on the national level.

If the Oct. 4, 2023 test is postponed due to widespread severe weather or other significant events, the backup testing date is Oct. 11.

What must I do when I receive the national test?

No action is needed.

Why are you testing this system now?

Legislation passed in 2015 requires FEMA to conduct nationwide tests of IPAWS at least once every three years. The tests can include WEA, EAS and other alert and warning systems. The most recent national test was in 2021.

What will the national test display on my mobile phone?

“THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.” Phones set to Spanish will display: “ESTA ES UNA PRUEBA del Sistema Nacional de Alerta de Emergencia. No se necesita acción.”

The test will include tones and vibration to capture your attention.

What will the national test announce on TV and radio?

“This is a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System, issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, covering the United States from 14:20 to 14:50 hours ET. This is only a test. No action is required by the public.”

How do I ensure that I receive the national test?

All major U.S. wireless providers participate in Wireless Emergency Alerts and will transmit the national test to their subscribers. If your mobile phone is on and within range of an active cell tower from a participating wireless provider, you should receive the national test.

Wireless providers will transmit the national test for 30 minutes, but your phone should only receive it once. Some providers do not participate in WEA and will not transmit the national test.

If your radio or TV is on and tuned to a broadcast station, a satellite radio or TV service or cable or wireless TV, it should receive the national test from the Emergency Alert System.



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Is there a cost to receive the national test?

No.

Do I need to sign up to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts or the national test?

No sign-up, account or subscription is needed to receive WEA or the national test. Some local governments have their own mass-notification systems that require subscriptions.

Can the national test monitor, locate or lock my phone?

No.

Will the national test be used to gather my private data?

No. Both EAS and WEA are broadcast technologies and do not collect any of your data. This test is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the systems in sending an emergency message.

What if I am on a phone call at the time of the national test?

The national test will not interrupt a phone call.

I will be traveling away from home on Oct. 4. Will I still receive the national test?

If your mobile phone is on and receiving service from a participating wireless provider, you should receive the national test.

Can I opt-out of tests in my phone settings?

Recent models of mobile phones include a setting to opt-out of tests and alerts. None of those settings will affect the 2023 national test. If your mobile phone is on and receiving service from a participating wireless provider, you should receive the national test.

I didn't receive the national test on my mobile phone. Why?

Only WEA-compatible mobile phones that are switched on, not on 'airplane' mode, within range of an active cell tower, and whose wireless providers participate in WEA will be capable of receiving the test message.