Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) 2024 Regional Test FAQs

What is the purpose of the regional test?

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

What must I do when I receive the regional test?

No action is needed. However, we recommend registering for emergency alerts by visiting https://member.everbridge.net/311578402488335/login

Why are you testing this system now?

Legislation passed in 2018 (SB 833) requires local government agencies to have the ability to send emergency alerts to its community via multiple communication pathways. To ensure those pathways are operational, Alert SouthBay is conducting a test of it's alert system.

What will the regional test display on my mobile phone?

"THIS IS A TEST of the Alert SouthBay Regional Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed. For information about this alert, please visit www.alertsouthbay.com" Phones set to Spanish will display: "ESTA ES UNA PRUEBA del Sistema Regional de Alerta de Emergencia. No se necesita acción."

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

How do I ensure that I receive the regional test?

All major U.S. wireless providers participate in Wireless Emergency Alerts and will transmit the regional test to their subscribers. If you have a WEA-compatible mobile phone that is on, within range of an active cell tower, and on a network where WEA is supported, you should receive the regional test.

Wireless providers will transmit the regional test for 60 minutes, but your phone should only receive it once. Some providers do not participate in WEA and will not transmit the regional test. Some providers may participate in WEA on part of their network.

Is there a cost to receive the regional test?

No.

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

No, all US consumer cell phones should receive the test.

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

No.

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

No. WEA is a broadcast technology and does not collect any of your data. This test is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the systems in sending an emergency message.

Alert SouthBay will send the regional test message and will analyze system responses to see that the private sector network receives the test message interfaces that, in turn, distribute the test message to cell phones. Because the technology is broadcast, we don't have data on whether individual cell phones, radios, or televisions actually receive a message.

What if I am on a phone call during the regional test?

The regional test will not interrupt a phone call.

If there is an audible component to the WEA, will it override someone's phone set to silent/vibrate?

To receive a WEA message, your wireless phone or mobile device must be WEA-capable, switched on, and in the vicinity of and receiving service from a cell tower or a wireless service provider participating in WEA. If you turn off the vibration or

sound on your WEA-capable device, you may not feel the vibration or hear the attention signal of a WEA message.

I will be traveling away from home on Jan. 9. Will I still receive the regional test?

If your mobile phone is on and receiving service from a participating wireless provider and you are in the vicinity where the alert is sent, you will receive the alert. However, if you are outside of the geofence, such as in Downtown Los Angeles, you will not receive the alert.

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

Recent models of mobile phones may include a setting to opt-out of tests and alerts. Check under your phone settings for the options.

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

Only WEA-compatible phones that are switched on, not on 'airplane' mode, within range of an active cell tower, and on a network where the wireless provider participates in WEA will be capable of receiving the test message.

I realize people's phones will get the alert, but how do you do this?

Alert SouthBay sends alerts very similar to the way that more than 1,700 other local, state, territorial, and tribal authorities use IPAWS to send alerts. There are multiple private sector alert origination tools that authorities can use to send alerts to IPAWS for distribution to cell phones as Wireless Emergency Alerts, EAS emergency broadcasts on TV and radio, and other emerging public communications systems that display emergency alerts.

Is there new equipment/software that needs to be tested or is this an annual thing now?

The testing process is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of Alert SouthBay's public alert and warning systems to distribute an emergency message across the South Bay region and the operational readiness of the infrastructure for the distribution of a regional message to the public. Testing will ensure an effective

and reliable system exists to provide timely and accurate alerts to the public and provide information to help determine whether technological improvements are needed.

Is there an illustration of what the text alert will look like?

See below: an example image of the national test conducted by FEMA on Oct. 4, 2023.

Response to Rumors

Rumor: Cell phones will be inoperable during the test

There's no truth to these claims. The regional test alert, or any alert issued via Alert SouthBay's IPAWS, will not make your phone or any other device 'inoperable.' The sole purpose of the test is to ensure that WEA continues to be an effective way to warn the public about emergencies, particularly those on the regional level. Both WEA and EAS use broadcast technologies and cannot collect any of your data.

Rumor: People will have to cancel or dismiss the alert to continue using their device and the alert sound for the whole 30 minutes

The specifics for phone behavior for WEA are defined by the wireless industry in specifications developed and maintained by the Alliance for Telecommunications

Industry Solutions (ATIS). Alert SouthBay has observed that phone behavior can be slightly different among phone types. But generally:

- If the phone is off before the test alert is sent and not turned back on until after the WEA test message expires, the phone will not get the test message.
- The WEA alert tone is generally only played once when the alert is initially received by the phone and lasts only seconds. On some devices, the tone will stop as soon as the user clicks a button.
- Phone operations are not disabled or interrupted when an alert is received nor after the alert is dismissed by the phone operator.

Rumor: The alerts are harmful due to high frequency signals, activating graphene oxide and nanoparticles. These posts urge people to turn off their phones.

These posts are false. Although Alert SouthBay does perform regionwide tests of WEA, the sole purpose of the tests is to ensure that the systems continue to be an effective means of warning the public about emergencies, particularly those on the regional level.

The EAS and WEA are critical tools used to warn the civilian population in areas endangered by natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters or threats to public safety. These alerts save lives and allow people to protect property when disasters strike, and the tests Alert SouthBay performs with our partners are intended to ensure that the systems are working properly.

The audio signal that will be used in the regional test is the same combination of audio tones that has been used since 1963 by the original Emergency Broadcast System. One of the reasons for using these tones for WEA messages is because of the public's familiarity with the tones and their association with emergency alerting.

The regional test and tones will be the same as those sent by more than 1,700 local, state, territorial, and tribal authorities who use IPAWS to send alerts. Alert SouthBay is not aware of any adverse health effects caused by the audio signal.

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Alert SouthBay

Alert SouthBay Regional Alert and Warning Notification System

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