

EMERGENCY ALERTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

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Q: Why are Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) important to me?

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

Q: What are WEA messages?

A: Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are public safety emergency messages sent by authorized government authorities regarding threats to public safety from situations such as extreme weather or a threatening emergencies. The wireless carriers then push the alerts to cell phones and enabled mobile devices in the affected area.

Q: Do I need to sign up for WEA?

A: No. You don't need an app or to subscribe to a service.

Q: What types of WEA alerts will I receive?

A: Extreme weather, and other threatening emergencies in your area, AMBER Alerts, & Presidential Alerts during a national emergency.

Q: What should I do when I receive a WEA message?

A: Follow any action advised by the message. Seek more details from local media or authorities.

Q: What does a WEA message look like?

A: WEA will look like a text message. The WEA message will 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.

Q: How will I know the difference between WEA and a regular text message?

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

Q: 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?

A: Yes, if you have a WEA-capable phone and your wireless carrier participates in the program. (More than 100 carriers, including all the largest carriers, do.)

Q: What if I don't have a mobile phone?

A: While WEA alerts require the use of a mobile phone (including some prepaid phones), emergency officials send notifications through other sources such as NOAA Weather Radio, news broadcasts and the Emergency Alert System on radio and TV, and SoCoAlerts and Nixle.

Q: How can I find out more information about WEA?

A: The FCC offers this guide: <http://transition.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/wea.pdf>

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Q: What is the difference between WEA and SoCoAlerts and Nixle?

A: WEA is a short text message designed to capture your attention. Emergency officials currently only have 90 characters for the message.

- You do not need to subscribe to WEA or download an App.
- You do need to enable WEA notifications in the settings center of your phone such as the Government Alerts Section for Apple, or Wireless & Networks section-Cell Broadcasts settings in Android phones.

SoCoAlerts is a free emergency notification service that provides Sonoma County first responders the ability to notify residents and businesses by telephone, mobile phone, text message, email and social media regarding local emergencies.

- You choose which methods of contact that you prefer including phone calls and/or text or email messaging to more than one number.
- Messages from SoCoAlert often include more in-depth details about a critical event such as evacuation notifications, shelter-in-place, boil water advisories and flood warnings.
- You must sign up for SoCoAlerts.
- Sign up at www.socoemergency.org or call (866) 939-0911.

NIXLE is a free service that allows community members to opt to receive up-to-the-minute, neighborhood information for where you live, work, visit – or for your family and friends located throughout the country.

- You choose the information you want, for the locations you want, from urgent public safety alerts to less time sensitive advisories and community information.
- You choose how you want to receive the information, whether it's over your cell phone by text message, by email or over the web (or all the above).
- You stay connected to what is happening in the community at locations that are relevant to you. Registration is free, and secure.
- Register at www.nixle.com

Learn more: SoCoEmergency.org

