
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
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Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate
Readiness

B.C. testing emergency alerts to cellphones, TV, radio Provincial test ensures readiness of public alerting system

VICTORIA –

Summary

- *Provincewide test of BC Emergency Alert system scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 1:55 p.m.*
- *Alerts will be sent to cellphones and will interrupt TV, radio broadcasts*

A test of the BC Emergency Alert system will occur at 1:55 p.m. (Pacific time) on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, during Emergency Preparedness Week.

The test alert will be sent to all compatible cellphones and will interrupt radio and television broadcasts. The alert will be clearly identified as a test and will not require any action from the public.

The test message to cellphones will resemble the following:

“This is a TEST of the Emergency Alert system. This is ONLY a TEST. In an emergency, this message would tell you what to do to stay safe. This information could save your life. This is ONLY a TEST. No action is required.”

To receive alerts, cellphones must be:

- turned on
- connected to an LTE cellular network
- not set to “do not disturb” or airplane mode
- wireless public alerting (WPA) compatible
- within the alert area and have up-to-date cellular software

Strengthening emergency alerting in B.C.

The alert is part of a national test of the National Public Alerting System, which is a collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial governments, as well as industry partners.

The emergency alerting system is tested twice a year in British Columbia. Testing improves public awareness about B.C.’s emergency alerting system, provides people with an example of what to expect in the event of an emergency, and provides an opportunity to adjust the system

before any real emergency.

BC Emergency Alerts are an important tool to provide people with timely, life-saving information when they need it.

Who sends emergency alerts

- The Province can issue BC Emergency Alerts for emergency situations, including wildfires, floods, landslides, tsunamis and extreme-heat emergencies.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada is responsible for issuing emergency alerts for tornadoes, hurricanes, severe thunderstorms and storm surges.
- Through the Earthquake Early Warning system, Natural Resources Canada can issue automatic alerts for earthquakes when thresholds are met. This system will automatically send an emergency alert to cellphones in the area expected to be affected, before strong shaking is felt.
- Police are responsible for issuing emergency alerts for police-related incidents and Amber Alerts.

People in British Columbia can participate in a short online survey following the test to help determine the reach of the test message.

- Survey link in English: <https://peasi.com/emergency-alert-test-survey.html>
- Survey link in French: <https://peasi.com/enquete-de-test-dalerte-durgence.html>

Quick Facts:

- Alerts will be broadcast automatically at no cost to the user.
- In 2022, the Province expanded BC Emergency Alerts beyond tsunami warnings to include threats such as wildfires, floods and extreme-heat emergencies.

Learn More:

- To learn more about BC Emergency Alerts, including when you may receive one and what to do if you receive one, visit: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/emergency-alerts>
- For information during active emergencies in the province, visit: <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca> and follow @EmergencyInfoBC on X and Facebook
- PreparedBC is a one-stop shop for disaster-readiness information. For tips on how to prepare an emergency plan and what to include in an emergency kit, visit: <https://www.PreparedBC.ca/>
- To register with Emergency Support Services, visit: <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>

Contact:

Ministry of Emergency Management and
Climate Readiness
Media Relations
250-880-6430

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