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UK Emergency Alert Test to Return in 2025: What You Need to Know

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Millions of mobile phone users across the United Kingdom will receive a loud, siren-like message later this year as part of the government's next nationwide Emergency Alert system test. The test is part of a public safety plan designed to quickly warn people about life-threatening emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or floods.

The Emergency Alert system, which sends loud notifications to phones and tablets, was first trialed in April 2023. The government intends to test the system every two years, and the next trial is expected sometime in 2025, though an exact date has not yet been confirmed.

When the test takes place, mobile devices across the UK will emit a loud, siren-like sound for about 10 seconds, even if they are set to silent. The alert will also cause the phone to vibrate and may read the message aloud. The purpose is to ensure the alert grabs the user's attention in urgent situations.

Alerts will include a short message explaining the emergency and a link to the official gov.uk website or a phone number for more information. These alerts are sent based on your current location, not where you live or work, and do not require you to have location services turned on.

Only authorised bodies such as emergency services, government departments, and public agencies can send these alerts. They are intended to inform the public quickly and accurately when serious threats arise. Since the first test in 2023, the system has already been used in real-life events. Alerts were sent out during Storm Darragh in 2024, and again in early 2025 for Storm Éowyn, which marked the system's most extensive use to date.

The system aims to keep people safe by delivering urgent warnings directly to their devices. Similar alert systems are already used in countries like the United States and the Netherlands.

For many people, the 2023 test was their first experience with such an alert. Phones nationwide rang out with the emergency sound, surprising users and demonstrating how effective the system could be in a real crisis.

As the UK prepares for the 2025 test, the government encourages the public not to be alarmed when the alert sounds. It's simply a drill to make sure the system works as planned.

More details about the exact date and time of the test will be shared closer to the event. For now, all UK residents should know how the system works and how it could one day help save lives.