



Survey Report

Canada's Alert Ready Test

Conducted November 17, 2021

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Summary

On November 17, 2021, provincial and territorial emergency officials, with the exception of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, conducted tests of Canada’s National Public Alert System (NPAS) known as Alert Ready. These public test alerts were sent via radio, television, LTE compatible wireless devices, and other third-party emergency alert products such as Alertable.

This was the seventh time that Alert Ready public tests incorporated wireless devices, after two tests in 2018, two in 2019, one in 2020, and one in May 2021. The majority of provinces and territories issued their alerts at 1:55 PM local time.

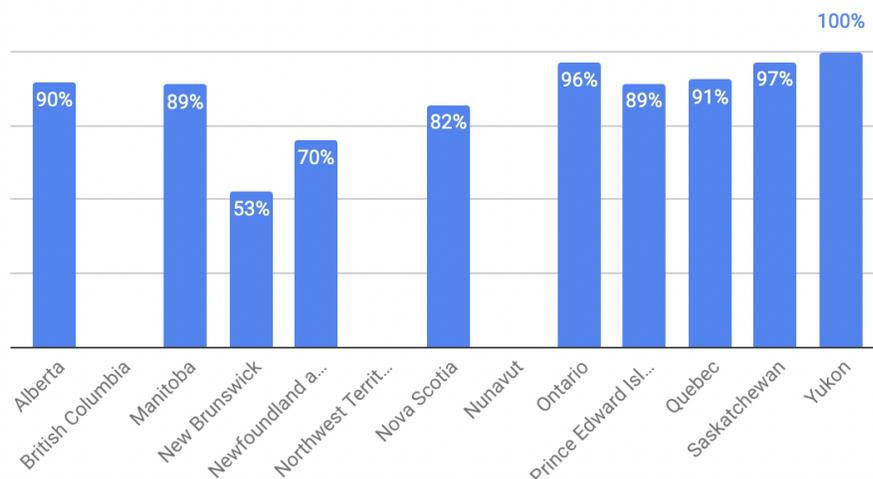
The one-way broadcast nature of most Alert Ready distribution channels such as radio, television, and LTE compatible wireless devices does not provide a direct way for the public to provide feedback on alerts received, including test alerts.

Therefore, Public Emergency Alerting Services Inc (PEASI) takes the initiative to solicit feedback each time and did so again for the November 17, 2021 test, with a specific interest in the effectiveness of the wireless alerting channel.

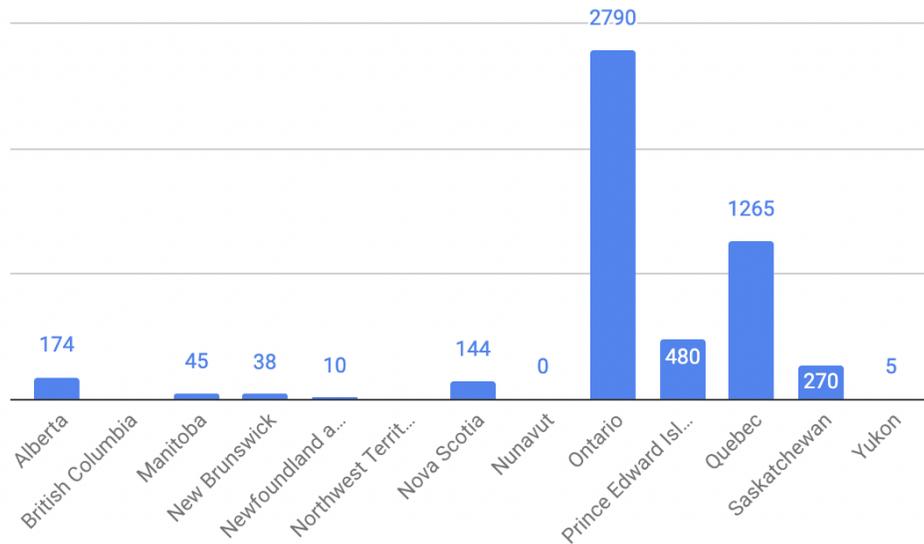
PEASI created an online survey and asked the Canadian public to fill it out. The survey was widely shared via government officials, social media, news organizations, and on the Alert Ready website before and during the tests. The survey is provided in the appendix.

Results

Wireless Alert Success Rate



Total Survey Responses



- A total of 5,336 survey responses were received, an increase of 7.9% from the last survey. This can be attributed to the increased number of provinces choosing to participate in the test alert as many provinces chose not to participate in the last test, largely because of COVID-19 priorities.
- A total of 115 responses were received for other locations (U.S., not provided, etc) and are not reflected in the charts above.
- British Columbia and the Northwest Territories chose not to participate this year due to active emergencies. Although Nunavut participated in the test, no responses to the survey were received from there. Responses from PEI increased 93% and responses from Saskatchewan increased 964%.
- 52% of the survey responses came from Ontario, with 23.7% from Quebec, and the remainder from the other provinces and territories.
- 92.6% of respondents reported receiving the wireless test message (an increase of 4.5% from the last test), 7.4% reported they did not. Overall this is an increasing trend as only 70% of respondents received the alert in November 2018.
- Yukon had the highest wireless success rate with 100%, followed by Saskatchewan with 97% and Ontario with 96%. Of the provinces that sent a test alert, New Brunswick had the lowest wireless success rate reported with 53% received.
- 92% of respondents reported that the test message was clear and understandable, which is a 2.1% decrease from the last test. Links to the test alert messages sent by each province are available in the appendix.

- Next to wireless, the most popular alert distribution channels were third-party mobile apps and television, same as the last test in May 2021. 20.1% of respondents reported receiving the alert through mobile app, television followed with 13.7%, radio with 7.4%, and social media at 4.6%.
- 54% of problems with receiving the wireless alert were reported from users with an Android device and 41.9% were using an iPhone.
- For devices that successfully received the wireless alert, 50.1% reported using an iPhone while 48.6% reported using an Android device.
- Of the respondents who reported problems receiving the test, 58% reported that they had successfully received a previous test or a real alert for a past emergency, indicating that something prevented them from receiving the test this time.
- 57.8% of the respondents reported having received a real alert for a recent emergency in addition to receiving the most recent test alert, indicating that previously impacted recipients are engaged and paying attention to these tests.
- The top 5 suggestions from respondents to the question “If you could improve one thing about emergency alerts, what would it be?” were:
 - Be able to override device settings, specifically volume, vibrate and silence/do not disturb modes.
 - Change the sound. While some thought it should be louder, most think it is too intrusive and that different sounds should be used for different types of alerts. For example, different tones for a test alert, an Amber Alert, or another type of emergency.
 - Have the ability to opt out of some or all alerts. Some respondents suggested having tiers of alerts, with the ability to disable tests and less severe alerts.
 - Ensure more people receive them and that more warning is given out ahead of the test alert. Older cell phones and those without cell phones are examples of those not receiving alerts. Both email and landline databases were suggested as possible solutions as well as a downloadable app and social media.
 - Improve the headline and description of the event. The alert information should be more clear and improve the content and display (e.g. include pictures, video, language translation, use rich text, etc). A link should also be provided to ensure people know where to go to get more information.

Other

- There were a few reports received about wireless alerts being received in the United States but close to the Canadian border.
- A few reports were received about no alerts on television channels and television alerts continually repeating.
- 33.8% of respondents who reported not receiving the test alert were using Telus as their service provider, 30.3% were using Bell, and 13.4% were using Rogers.
- Respondents reported they did not have enough time to read the WPA message and would like an SMS text instead that they could refer back to. Others would like alerts to have improved location targeting and have the ability to filter what alerts they receive. And others would like a longer vibration, lights, and text to voice for those who have accessibility challenges and to have alerts sent through multiple channels (e.g. tablet, app, or an email list). Including additional languages besides English and French is desired.
- Many respondents commented on the Alert Ready system in general, and specifically about Amber alerts. Some commented they did not want to receive Amber alerts at all, or not at night, and many others commented that these alerts should be targeted to smaller regions. Many comments supporting the use of Alert Ready for Amber alerts were also received.

More Information

If you would like more information regarding the November 17, 2021 Alert Ready test, please submit your inquiry here: <https://www.alertready.ca/#contact>.

If you would like more information on the community and workplace notification software, Alertable, that serves over 1,300 Canadian municipalities and a population of nearly 10 million, please see here: <https://peasi.com/>

Appendix

Survey Questions

1. Did you receive the emergency alert test message on your wireless mobile device?
(Yes, No)

If No:

1. What type of mobile device do you have? (iPhone, Android, Other)
2. Have you recently updated your device to the latest software version? (Yes, No, Don't Know)
3. Who is your wireless provider? (Rogers, Bell, Telus, Shaw, Videotron, Sasktel, Eastlink, Other)
4. Have you received a previous wireless emergency alert before, either from a past test (in May 2021) or from a real emergency? (Yes, from a past test May 2021; Yes, from a real emergency; No)

If Yes:

1. What type of mobile device do you have? (iPhone, Android, Other)
 2. Who's your cellphone provider? (Rogers, Bell, Telus, Shaw, Videotron, Sasktel, Eastlink, Other)
 3. Did you click on the website link in the wireless alert message for more details?
(Yes, there was a link and I clicked it; No, there was a link but I didn't click it; No link was available)
 4. Have you received a previous wireless emergency alert before, either from a past test (in May 2021) or from a real emergency? (Yes, from a past test in May 2021; Yes, from a real emergency; No)
2. Did you receive the emergency alert test message any other way? Check all that apply.
(Radio, Television, Social Media, Public alert mobile app (ie. Alertable, The Weather Network, Alberta Emergency Alert, SaskAlert, etc.), None of the above)
 3. Did you understand the instructions in the emergency alert test message? (Yes, No, Partially, they were a little confusing)
 4. What Province/Territory were you in when the test message was sent?
 5. If you could improve one thing with emergency alerts, what would it be?

Alert Ready Test Messages

Province/Territory	Test Message
Alberta	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222043
Manitoba	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222027
New Brunswick	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/221957
Newfoundland and Labrador	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/221955
Nova Scotia	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222006
Nunavut	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222023
Ontario	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222005
Prince Edward Island	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/221998
Quebec	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222021
Saskatchewan	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222030
Yukon	https://alertable.ca/#/details/2021/222045

Sample Alert Ready Wireless Public Alert Test Messages

Sample test alerts that were seen by the public on LTE compatible wireless devices:

