

Stay Informed

How is an Emergency Information Advisory issued?

Emergency Information Advisories can be distributed through:

EMO website <https://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca>

Email notification

SMS text messaging

RSS feeds

Twitter

Facebook

Radio

When is an Emergency Information Advisory issued?

Emergency Information Advisories are issued by The Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

Some situations in which an Emergency Information Advisory might be issued include:

- Large-scale power outage
- Threats to public safety
- Major transportation incidents

Emergency Information Advisories may also be issued in the early phases of a major incident that could escalate to a **Red Alert** being issued.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System

1. Q: What is Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System?

Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System is a tool that provides timely and accurate information to Ontario residents, businesses and visitors during an emergency.

The system allows Ontarians to receive three types of warnings:

- [Red Alerts](#)
- [Emergency Information Advisories](#)
- [Tornado Warnings](#)

2. Q: What is the history of Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System?

Ontario launched the Red Alert program in May 2008. The system was modeled after the successful Amber Alert program which is operated jointly between the Ontario Association of Broadcasters (OAB) and the Ontario Provincial Police. The system consisted of issuing Red Alerts through OAB, Pelmorex (The Weather Network), Canada News Wire, Toronto Sun and Toronto Star, OnStar™ and other media groups.

3. Q: How has Ontario's Red Alert program evolved since 2008?

The Red Alert program has evolved into Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System which involved a number of enhancements, including:

- The addition of Emergency Information Advisories and Tornado Warnings
- Greater outreach to emergency management professionals
- New subscriber services available through www.ontario.ca/emo:
 - Email
 - RSS feeds
 - SMS text messaging
- New distribution methods, including:
 - Twitter and Facebook notifications
 - Updated web content

Red Alerts

4. Q: What is a Red Alert?

The province issues a Red Alert to provide recommended immediate actions to protect citizens, their families and others when there is an imminent threat to life, public safety or property.

5. Q: When would a Red Alert be issued?

Some situations in which a Red Alert may be issued include:

- Large fire or explosion
- Chemical leak or spill
- Nuclear emergency
- Transportation accident

6. Q: What are the criteria for issuing a Red Alert?

Red Alerts are issued by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management's Provincial Emergency Operations Centre when the following three criteria are satisfied:

- Confirmation from municipal/ministry partners or another trusted source that an incident has or is about to occur
- Confirmation that the incident or emergency may pose a major risk to life, public safety, security or substantial damage to property
- An immediate broadcast with a call to action may help reduce the potential threat to life, public safety, security or damage to property

7. Q: How are Red Alerts received?

Red Alerts will be posted on the Emergency Management Ontario website and may be distributed through various media outlets, email subscriber services, SMS text messaging, RSS feed, Facebook and Twitter notifications.

8. Q: How long does it take to issue a Red Alert?

The process of issuing a Red Alert is very quick. Every effort will be made to ensure the timely distribution of an Alert; however, accuracy of information must not be compromised.

9. Q: What language are Red Alerts issued in?

Red Alerts will be issued in English and French. Given the urgency of the situation, Alerts will always be posted in English first, followed by French as soon as possible.

Emergency Information Advisories

10. Q: What is an Emergency Information Advisory?

An Emergency Information Advisory provides information to Ontarians about current or evolving emergency situations or significant events.

Advisories may provide further instruction on actions to take.

11. Q: When would an Emergency Information Advisory be issued?

Some situations in which an Emergency Information Advisory might be issued include:

- Large-scale power outage
- Threats to public safety
- Major transportation incident

12. Q: What are the criteria for issuing an Emergency Information Advisory?

An Advisory will be issued by the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre if the incident is of provincial significance. One of the following criteria must be met:

- May pose a significant risk to life, safety or property;
- May generate considerable public concern; and
- May receive considerable media profile.

13. Q: How are Emergency Information Advisories received?

Information about a breaking emergency will be posted on the Emergency Management Ontario website and also distributed through email subscriber services, SMS text messaging, RSS feed and Twitter notifications.

14. Q: How long does it take to issue an Emergency Information Advisory?

The process of issuing an Emergency Information Advisory is very quick. Every effort will be made to ensure the timely distribution of an Advisory; however, accuracy of information must not be compromised.

15. Q: What language are Emergency Information Advisories issued in?

Advisories will be issued in English and French. Advisories will always be posted in English first, followed by French as soon as possible.

Tornado Warnings

- [Recent changes to Tornado Warnings](#)

16. Q: What is a Tornado Warning?

A Tornado Warning is issued when a tornado is either imminent or occurring in a given area. Environment Canada and EMO will issue a joint alert for tornadoes that include protective action measures for the general public.

17. Q: How are Tornado Warnings received?

Information will be posted on the Emergency Management Ontario website and also distributed through email subscriber services, SMS text messaging, RSS feeds.

18. Q: How long does it take to issue a Tornado Warning?

Immediately from Environment Canada via OFMEM distribution list.

19. Q: What languages are Tornado Warnings issued in?

Tornado Warnings will be issued in English and French.

General

20. Q: What is an RSS feed?

[Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication \(RSS\)](#) sends all of your news to one place. RSS feeds are pulled together through a web-based reader or through desktop software you download and install. You can subscribe to receive Red Alert, Emergency Information Advisory or Tornado Warning RSS feeds through the Emergency Management Ontario website.

21. Q: What is SMS text messaging?

Short Message Service (SMS) is a service that allows for short text messages to be sent to your mobile device. You can subscribe to receive Red Alert, Emergency Information Advisory or Tornado Warning text messages through the Emergency Management Ontario website.

22. Q: Who will be sending out the warnings?

Red Alerts, Emergency Information Advisories and Tornado Warnings will be issued from the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre. They will always be sent from the same email address at warnings@ontario.ca.

23. Q: Are messages different depending on the device I use?

Yes, messages will vary according to the mode of communication used. Every communication method has different limitations. For example, messages received by email can be longer than text messages and Twitter messages.

24. Q: How will you use my email address and other information collected about me?

Any personal information you provide, including your email address, will only be used to send you emergency information through Alerts, Advisories or Warnings. You will not be placed on any other mailing lists, and your information will not be released to any third party.

For complete details, please see Ontario's [privacy statement](#).

Registration

25. Q: How do I register to receive Red Alerts, Emergency Information Advisories and Tornado Warnings?

To sign up for Alerts, Advisories or Warnings, please visit www.ontario.ca/emo.

26. Q: How do I unsubscribe to email Alerts, Advisories and Warnings?

You can cancel your subscription to email Alerts, Advisories or Warnings any time by clicking the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of any Alert or Advisory email you receive.

27. Q: How do I unsubscribe to SMS text messaging?

You can cancel your subscription to SMS text messaging by texting "unsubscribe" from your mobile device to askofmem@ontario.ca.

28. Q: Can I register to receive warnings if I don't live or work in Ontario?

Yes, anyone can register to receive email Alerts, Advisories or Warnings; however, you must have a mobile device from one of the following Canadian or US service providers to receive text messages. If your service provider is not listed please [contact us](#).

Canadian Service Providers

- Bell Mobility & Solo Mobile
- Fido
- Koodo Mobile
- MTS Mobility
- PC Telecom
- Rogers Wireless
- SaskTel
- TBaytel
- Telus Mobility
- Virgin Mobile
- Wind Mobile

US Service Providers

- AT&T
- Verizon Wireless
- Sprint Nextel
- T-Mobile
- Virgin Mobile

29. Q: Why is my service provider not listed?

There are over 200 hundred service providers within Canada and the US. We have chosen the most common service providers that have [email to SMS gateways](#). However, if your service provider is not listed please [contact us](#) and we can update the service providers list if they have an email to SMS gateway.

Some Canadian service providers that currently **DO NOT** offer an email to SMS gateway include:

- Mobilicity
- Public Mobile
- Chatr Wireless

30. Q: How do I update my personal information?

If your personal information changes you will need to unsubscribe and re-subscribe with your new information.

31. Q: Can I suspend my account?

No, you cannot suspend your account. If you do not want to receive emergency warnings for a specific period of time you must unsubscribe and later re-subscribe when you are ready to receive them again.

32. Q: Can I add multiple phone numbers or email addresses?

Yes, you can add as many phone numbers or email addresses as you would like. However, you will need to repeat the registration process for every additional number or email address that you wish to include.

Technical Support

33. Q: Who do I contact if there is a problem?

Please send all questions and concerns by [contacting us](#).

34. Q: How do I prevent SPAM filters from blocking the warnings?

Internet Service Providers use a number of different methods to prevent unsolicited commercial email (junk mail or spam) from being delivered to a user's mailbox. Some of these methods may mistakenly identify warnings@ontario.ca as such and as a result will not deliver the Alert or Advisory to the recipient. To assure you receive all of the warnings sent through email please add warnings@ontario.ca to your address book or safe-sender list.

35. Q: I signed up to receive Red Alerts, Emergency Information Advisories and Tornado Warnings, why am I not getting any messages?

After an account is created, you must confirm the account before you will receive a message. Upon registration, you should have received an email asking you to confirm your account. You must respond in order to activate your account. Please also refer to [question 30](#) for information regarding spam filters.

36. Q: I didn't receive an email to confirm my subscription, what should I do?

Before you contact us, check your junk folder to make sure the email was not sent there. In addition, try adding warnings@ontario.ca to your email safe-sender list.

37. Q: How do I unsubscribe from SMS text messages?

Please email your phone number and service provider to askofmem@ontario.ca, with the subject line unsubscribe. You will then be unsubscribed.