



# Survey Report

Canada's Alert Ready Test

May 8 & 15, 2024

**PEASI**

p: (888) 400-5661  
e: [info@peasi.com](mailto:info@peasi.com)

# Table of Contents

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>    | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Key Results</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Other Observations</b>   | <b>4</b> |
| <b>More Information</b>     | <b>5</b> |
| <b>Appendix</b>             | <b>6</b> |
| Survey Questions            | 6        |
| Alert Ready Test Messages   | 7        |
| Suggestions for Improvement | 8        |

## Executive Summary

On May 8 and 15, 2024, provincial and territorial emergency officials conducted tests of Canada's national emergency alert system, Alert Ready. This test included several notable changes from previous tests. Public Safety Canada issued a cross-jurisdictional test with one alert covering British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon and Nunavut and a second alert for New Brunswick and Quebec. Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories issued their own alerts as they have done in previous tests, while Ontario issued their own alert a week later. Test alerts were sent via radio, television, LTE-compatible wireless devices, and other third-party emergency alert products like Alertable.

Due to the one-way broadcast nature of most Alert Ready distribution channels including radio, television, and LTE-compatible wireless devices, the public needs to be given a direct method to provide feedback on alerts received, including test alerts. To gather this feedback, we facilitate a public survey for each test. The survey questions are available in the appendix.

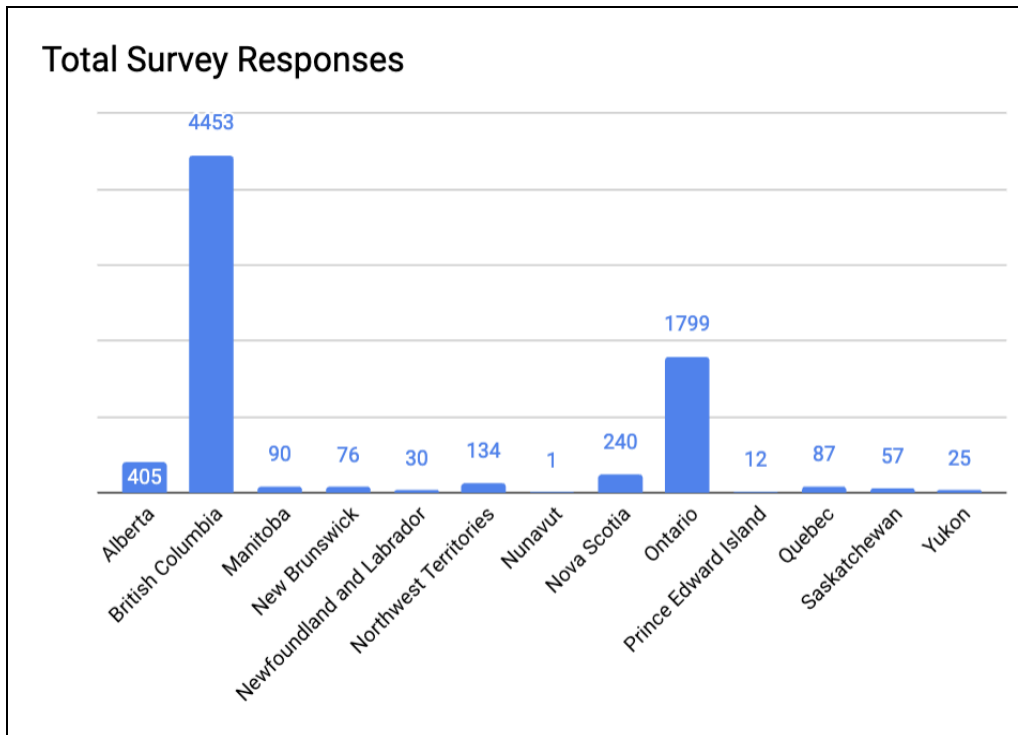
A total of 7691 survey responses were received, a 3% decrease from the previous survey in November 2023. Of these, 90 responses were received from individuals who either did not indicate the province or territory they were in when they received the alert or indicated a location outside of Canada. Because of this, their receipt of the alert could not be verified as coming through their wireless provider or local broadcaster.

British Columbia accounted for approximately 59% of the survey responses, with Ontario contributing another 24%. Overall, 95% of respondents reported receiving the alert. 3 different regions, Nunavut, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan had a reported success rate of 100%. In contrast, Yukon and Prince Edward Island had the lowest success rates at 71% and 83% respectively. Most provinces reported a success rate of 90% or higher. Notably, Ontario, a province that has historically reported an average success rate of 96%, decreased to 90% due to telecommunication carrier issues.

This survey was distributed to numerous users of the Alertable mobile app, who would have received the Alert Ready test alert through the app. As a result, some respondents may have unintentionally reported receiving the wireless alert, potentially inflating the reported success rates.

A third-party mobile app was the most popular alternate way to receive the alert. Among the respondents, 429 reported receiving the alert for the first time. Additionally, nearly 95% of respondents thought the message was clear and easy to understand.

# Key Results



- We received 7,691 survey responses, reflecting a 3% decrease from the last survey.
- 90 survey responses could not be accurately traced to a particular province or territory. This is either because the respondent didn't indicate their location or they indicated a location outside of Canada. These responses were excluded from certain statistical calculations in this report.
- 59% of the survey responses came from British Columbia and 24% from Ontario, with the remaining responses distributed across other provinces and territories.
- 95% of respondents reported receiving the wireless test message, a 1% increase from the past test.
- Of the respondents who did not receive the alert, 57% reported that they had previously received an alert, indicating that something prevented them from receiving the test this time.
- Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut and Saskatchewan reported the highest wireless success rate with 100%. Newfoundland and Labrador's success rate has fluctuated in the past, while Nunavut has reported a 100% success rate each time they have participated in the test and we have received feedback. Saskatchewan typically averages a 95% success rate, barring exceptions in May 2021 and November 2023.
- Yukon had the lowest wireless success rate at 71%.
- 95.1% of respondents reported that the test message was clear and understandable, a 0.4% increase from the last test.
- Next to wireless, the most popular alert distribution channels were:
  - Third-party mobile app: 45%
  - Television: 8.4%
  - Radio: 4.9%
  - Social media: 3.5%
- 58% of those reporting problems with receiving the alert were reported by individuals using an Apple device and 40% were using an Android device.
- For devices that successfully received the wireless alert, 66.6% reported using an iPhone while 33.4% reported using an Android device.

- 53.6% of the respondents reported receiving a real alert for a recent emergency and the most recent test alert, a 7.6% increase from the last test.
- When asked how prepared they would feel if this was a real emergency:
  - 15.1% said that they and their household would have been very prepared
  - 53.8% said they would be somewhat prepared
  - 24.8% said they were not very well prepared
  - 6.4% said they were not prepared at all.
- Many respondents shared suggestions when asked the question, “If you could improve one thing about emergency alerts, what would it be?”. The top 5 suggestions were:
  - Additional Information: Include instructions or a way to get more information. Many felt that including a link telling you how to get more prepared in an actual emergency would be useful.
  - Sound Adjustments: Enable different sounds for different alert types and include the ability to override silent mode.
  - Amber Alerts: Make these alerts more location-specific and include images of the abducted child.
  - Accessibility Enhancements: Increase the font size, use bold or different coloured text, and incorporate text-to-speech options.
  - Increased Usage: Use the system more frequently during emergencies and ensure it reaches a broader audience

A more complete list of the suggestions provided is available in the Suggestions for Improvement section of the appendix.

## Other Observations

- For those who reported not receiving the test alert:
  - 43.2% were using Rogers
  - 27.6% were using TELUS
  - 15.3% were using Bell.

- Many respondents asked for the ability to opt out of test alerts.
- Several respondents asked for the ability to turn off the sound but keep the alert on their screen to provide them more time to read and process the information provided.
- Those with Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids or those using headphones find the volume of the alert painful. Having a way for the alert to recognize when these devices are being used and lower the volume of the alert would be helpful.
- Several respondents asked for the ability to translate the alert into other languages.
- The most common answers to the question “How and when do you think the Alert Ready system should be used?” were:
  - Nothing, they like the system the way it is
  - Any time there is an emergency
  - For missing people and Amber alerts
  - Only when there is immediate danger.
- A problem was identified that prevented some Rogers Wireless customers from receiving the alert in Ontario on May 15 which isn't reflected in the responses received for the survey.
- There were some delays for broadcasters reported in Quebec, the alert was up to 5 minutes later than expected.

## More Information

For more information regarding the May 2024 Alert Ready test, visit: [Alert Ready](#)

For more information about the Alertable notification software, which serves over 1,300 Canadian municipalities and a population of nearly 10 million people visit: [Alertable](#)

# Appendix

## Survey Questions

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

If No:

- 1.1. What type of mobile device do you have? (iPhone/iPad (Apple); Android (includes Samsung, Motorola, LG, and other phone brands); Basic cellphone ((ZTE, Sonim, etc.); Other)
- 1.2. Have you recently updated your device to the latest software version? (Yes; No; Don't Know)
- 1.3. Who is your wireless provider? (Rogers; Bell; Telus; Shaw; Videotron; Sasktel; Eastlink; Other)
- 1.4. Have you received a wireless emergency alert before, either from a test or a real emergency? (Yes, from a past test; Yes, from a real emergency; Yes, from both; No, never)

If Yes:

- 1.5. What type of mobile device do you have? (iPhone/iPad (Apple); Android (includes Samsung, Motorola, LG, and other phone brands); Basic cellphone ((ZTE, Sonim, etc)
  - 1.6. Who is your mobile service provider? (Rogers; Bell; Telus; Shaw; Videotron; Sasktel; Eastlink; Other)
  - 1.7. Have you received a wireless emergency alert before, either from a test or a real emergency? (Yes, from a past test; Yes, from a real emergency; Yes, from both; No, never)
2. Did you receive the emergency alert test message any other way? Check all that apply. (Radio; Television; Social Media; Public alert 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. Had the emergency alert test message been for a real-life emergency, how prepared do you think you and your household would have been for that emergency? (Very well prepared, Somewhat well prepared, Not very well prepared, Not at all prepared).
5. What Province/Territory were you in when the test message was received? (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Yukon, United States, Other)
6. If you could improve one thing with emergency alerts, what would it be?
7. How and when do you think the Alert Ready system should be used?

## Alert Ready Test Messages

| Province/Territory   | Test Message  |
|--|---|
| Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Yukon | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367481">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367481</a> |
| Manitoba   | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367493">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367493</a> |
| New Brunswick and Quebec   | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367482">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367482</a> |
| Northwest Territories  | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367463">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367463</a> |
| Nova Scotia  | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367472">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367472</a> |
| Ontario  | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/368122">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/368122</a> |
| Prince Edward Island   | <a href="https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367462">https://alertable.ca/#/details/2024/367462</a> |

## Suggestions for Improvement

Many respondents provided feedback to answer the question “If you could improve one thing with emergency alerts, what would it be?”. While we mentioned the top 5 suggestions in the Key Results section of this report, additional suggestions are provided below:

- Use a calmer alert tone
- More warning before a test that the alert isn't for a real event
- Include a link to a video explaining the reason for the alert in greater detail
- Have a gradual increase in the alert volume
- Use straight-forward point form messaging rather than paragraphs so it's easier to read
- Do not change anything, it works great the way it is
- Improve the speed that alerts are delivered to people
- Change the time of the alert so it is not during school hours as the kids panic and this would allow families to discuss it and review their emergency plan
- Updates and cancellation alerts would be useful
- Provide a chronological log of all recent alerts that is easily accessible
- Provide the ability to turn the sound off but still have your device vibrate
- Vary the day of the week and the time that the test occurs
- Many people felt that either the system was not being tested enough, or that the tests should be reduced to once a year so people stop ignoring them
- Increase the font on the television message so it's easier to read
- Have devices recognize when a person is driving and not have the alert go through until the vehicle is stopped
- Have a button to push to turn off the sound of the alert and a separate one that clears the alert so people can have more time to read the alert in peace
- Shorten the message so it's easier to read
- More devices need to receive the alert, not just LTE-compatible ones

- Send a silent alert telling us the test is over
- Make the test alerts optional
- Add a link to an ASL video message
- Have the alert keep ringing the user until it has been seen and acknowledged, or at least have the alert sound for 15-20 seconds before it stops
- Add a voice component for those who struggle to read English
- Add the test alert to streaming services
- Add sirens to the alert, like firehall sirens, so those without compatible devices still know there is an alert
- Send an email or test before the test to let people know it's coming
- Make Amber alerts sound different than the other alerts
- Clearer headlines and urgency levels
- Provide a short warning sound before the actual alert to prepare people
- Provide follow-up links that show you how to prepare for an emergency
- Louder/harsher sound for alerts that are sent at night to make sure people wake up
- Have alerts come across desktop computers for those who are working when it goes off
- Have a flashing notification for those who are hard of hearing
- Include maps of areas to avoid or a map of how to get out of the area safely
- Give people the option to receive the alert in either English or French and send both if no preference is provided
- Use it more consistently between municipalities
- Include a URL for the website, not just the name of the website
- Include a picture of the type of hazard
- Include a line that says "Do you know someone who did not get this? Please forward them this message with the following link"
- Send test alerts via phone call

- Feedback varies on whether the system should be used for Amber alerts or not
- Conduct quarterly tests of the system
- Make sure tourists who receive the alert have the opportunity to click a link to receive the alert in their language of choice
- Include outside speakers or sirens for those who either don't have devices or have them turned off
- Allow the system to be useable for municipalities dealing with wildfires, floods, rock slides, major MVA incidents
- Have the ability to send alerts to specific areas
- Have all devices receive the alert at the same time regardless of which telecommunications carrier they are using
- Add a question asking people if they need help and provide an easy way for them to respond right in the alert
- Have the alert say "This is a test" instead of just the alarm sound
- Provide more education about what the alert system is and what it is used for
- Have the first line of the alert be in bold capital letters saying "THIS IS A TEST" to make it stand out
- Repeat the alert at 2-minute intervals 3 times to make sure everyone hears and acknowledges it
- A way to silence the alert, especially on phones that are hidden for safety reasons
- No improvement is necessary, it works great
- Ask a skill-testing question before a person can turn the alert sound off
- More clear messages as they can sometimes be misleading