

6 RULES FOR EFFECTIVE MOBILE ALERT MESSAGES

Millions of people receive emergency alerts every year, yet many fail to act. The difference? How the message is built and written.

Structure: Get the essentials right

ISSUER + HAZARD + LOCATION
+ TIME + ACTION + SOURCE

Style: Make every word count

Write short sentences. Avoid jargon, caps, acronyms & symbols.

1 WHO ISSUED THE ALERT?



Trust starts with knowing who sent the message. Mention the verified authority.

3 WHERE ARE YOU AT RISK?



Be specific about the area affected and indicate the nearest safety zones.

2 WHAT IS HAPPENING?



To avoid panic, use authoritative tone and state facts clearly: the type of hazard and its consequences.

5 HOW SHOULD YOU REACT?



Provide actionable steps so people know exactly what to do. Use strong action verbs like "evacuate".

4 WHAT IS THE TIMEFRAME?



Specify the expected start time, duration and the deadline for taking protective action.

6 WHERE TO GET MORE INFO?



Direct people to a trusted source for live updates and additional guidance.

Emergency Alert now
National Weather Service:
A flash flood warning is in effect along the Mile River until 4:45 PM CET. Flood waters can move swiftly and rise rapidly. Driving into flooded areas may result in injury or death. Do not travel by car or foot unless evacuating flooded area or under an evacuation order. Refer to flooding.service.gov for updates.

GOLDEN RULE

If someone reads it once in 5 seconds, will they know what to do?
If yes — your warning works.

Make your alerts inclusive

Mobile warnings must reach everyone in the affected area — and inclusivity must be reflected both in the public message and in the CAP structure behind it.



Plain language

Avoid jargon and acronyms. Use short sentences with everyday words and direct actions instead. Remain under 360 characters for CB messages, 160 for LB-SMS.

➤ "Extreme heat warning in effect today."
"Stay indoors."

Accessibility tips

Not everyone uses smartphones. Ensure the alerts stands alone (no link dependency), use screen-reader friendly text, avoid caps and special symbols.

➤ ~~SERIOUS ALERT!!!~~
~~STAY SAFE!~~

CAP-compliant structure

To support multi-channel dissemination and proper targeting, use CAP fields correctly: urgency, severity, certainty, event category, and area description.

➤ <headline>
<description>
<instruction>
<event>

Multi-language alerts

CAP allows multiple <info> blocks per language. Include one block per language and pre-validate translations.



Despite the potential of mobile technologies to warn at-risk communities, fewer than a quarter of countries have implemented mobile Early Warning Systems (EWS). This highlights an urgent need to accelerate the roll-out of mobile EWS globally. At Intersec, we emphasise a comprehensive approach to emergency warnings that is community-centric, end-to-end, multi-hazard, and multi-channel. By leveraging 3GPP, ETSI, ATIS standards, particularly the CAP protocol, we aim to create a straightforward and easily implementable public warning interface. Our public safety solutions reach 400 million people worldwide, and we are committed to expanding this impact.

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