



INFORMATION WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST



## WHAT IS ALERT IOWA?

A communication tool used by counties to communicate information on inclement weather, emergencies, and matters of public safety to you in a timely manner. You can sign up for Alert Iowa through text opt-in, through an online opt-in page, or by downloading the Smart911 App.

Availability may vary by county, but features include:

- Weather alerts
- County or Community specific alerts
- The ability to select messages in multiple languages
- Access and functional needs registry
- The ability to choose how you receive alerts (App, voice, text, email)

## FAQS

### Why should I sign-up for Alert Iowa?

When emergencies happen, be the first to know. Your County will use Alert Iowa to send official, real-time alerts to the public with information about potentially life-saving actions they may need to take to keep themselves and their families safe. By signing up for Alert Iowa you are taking a large step toward improving your personal safety.

### How do I know if my county participates in Alert Iowa?

The majority of Iowa counties have opted to participate in Alert Iowa. To find out if your county is participating visit the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) website [homelandsecurity.iowa.gov](http://homelandsecurity.iowa.gov) and select Alert Iowa under the Programs section.

### Who can sign-up for Alert Iowa?

Alert Iowa is available to anyone who lives, works, travels through, or visits Iowa. The address can be your home location, work location, or any other location you care about.

### **How do I sign up for Alert Iowa?**

You can sign up online through a web opt-in page for each county, visit [alert.iowa.gov](http://alert.iowa.gov), send a text to 672-83 with COUNTYNAMEIA (example- BLACKHAWKIA), or download the Smart911 App.



### **I don't own a computer – who can help me sign-up for Alert Iowa?**

You can visit your local library to sign up online for Alert Iowa. If you have a phone you can text opt-in, on smartphones you can download the Smart911 App.



### **Can I receive alerts for multiple counties?**

Yes. If you frequently travel over county boundaries you can opt-in to each through their opt-in page. Downloading the Smart911 App also allows you to receive alerts based off of your phones GPS coordinates.



### **How does it work?**

When an emergency occurs that meets the criteria for sending out an alert to the public, the county will gather the necessary information and push out an alert to the affected area. Alerts can be sent out county wide or to a specific area.

### **How much does it cost?**

This service is provided by Alert Iowa at no cost to the public; however, message and data rates may apply depending on your provider and phone services.

### **Can you guarantee that I will receive notification if I register?**

While Alert Iowa is an excellent system, we cannot guarantee that you will receive notification in all cases. Disasters and emergencies are chaotic and unpredictable, and notification is dependent on external providers such as your wireless carrier or email delivery service outside the alert originators control. Alert Iowa will use several means of communications to try to ensure that should any one communications method, technology, or delivery option be unavailable to reach residents, other methods will be used to improve the likelihood that citizens will see the message. You should sign up to receive multiple modes of contact, including voice, text, and email. Text messages are more likely to get through to you if lines are busy due to an emergency. Downloading Smart911 also provides another mode of communication and alerting.

## **What types of alerts will I receive?**

·Emergency alerts are sent 24/7 when there is an immediate threat to life and/or property. In addition to emergency alerts, you can also choose to receive customizable community notifications. These include notifications about:

- Severe Weather Alerts
- Community Alerts
- Special Event Information

## **Can I call the alert phone number back or reply back to the email?**

Voice messages provide a dial-back number to replay an alert message. Depending on who sent the alert and the type it may or may not allow for you to reply to it. It is important to listen to or read the full message for any important contact information that pertains to that message.

## **When will I start receiving alerts?**

Once you have signed up and confirmed your contact information within the system, you will begin receiving alerts.

## **How do I update or remove my notification preferences and contact information used by Alert Iowa?**

Follow the below steps to change your Alert Iowa preferences (for example, to reduce the number of messages of a certain type, or to change the contacts used for each kind of message):

1. Go to [alert.iowa.gov](http://alert.iowa.gov) and select the county you are registered in.
2. Login using your Alert Iowa username and password (If you've forgotten these, follow the instructions on the page under "Forgot Username or Password?")
3. Once signed in, click the 'Preferences' tab at the top
4. Under 'Notification Preferences', you can make changes to both the phone numbers and email addresses on which you want to receive Alerts powered by Smart911 [or insert your alert system name] messages by clicking or unclicking the checkboxes
5. You can also choose what alerts you want to receive and the method you wish to receive them by (text, voice, email)
  - a. For example, if you wish to turn off all messages regarding Transportation Disruptions, simply uncheck the box to the left of "Transportation Disruption"
  - b. If you wish instead only to receive emails for Transportation Disruption notifications, instead uncheck the "Text" and / or "Voice" choices, so that only "Email" remains checked

### **How often will I receive alerts?**

The frequency for which you receive alerts depends on the addresses you provide and the types of alerts you select to receive as well as the frequency of actual emergencies. Emergency alerts will only be sent when there is an immediate threat to life and/or property. Community notifications will be sent when the criteria for sending an alert are met. This system is not intended to bombard you with information. Alerts will only be sent to you about the information you select to receive. To change your alert settings, login to your corresponding County account through <https://homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/programs/alert-iowa/> or [smart911.com](https://smart911.com) and edit your preferences.

### **How often will I receive alerts?**

If a call completes and is sent to your answering machine or voice mail system, a message is left. If a phone call is not answered or busy, the system redials your number several times.

### **Will my information be disclosed or shared?**

No, your information is private and will not be used or distributed in any manner. The information that you provide is exempt from public disclosure and will be used for emergency purposes only.

### **What precautions are taken to protect personal contact information stored in the Alert Iowa system?**

Personal information provided to Alert Iowa is private and only used to notify you for official communications and to support emergency services.

Your information is not used for marketing purposes and will not be sold to telemarketers or data-mining organizations. A variety of “opt-in” mechanisms are available to ensure you are getting just the messages you want to receive, delivered via the devices and communications modes that you choose.

Alert Iowa utilizes the highest standards in physical and computer security technologies and conducts regular audits to ensure all information is kept secure. Privacy policies are also outlined in the Terms and Conditions you review when you sign up to receive Alert Iowa notifications.

**Information brought to you by the  
Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management**

