

Q&A on information transmission and actions in case of ballistic missile launch

[Information Transmission Overview]

Q1. When is the J-ALERT used?

A1.

The National Early Warning System (J-ALERT) is used when a ballistic missile may fall on or pass through Japanese land or territorial waters.

If the missile is not likely to fall on or pass through Japanese land or territorial waters, J-ALERT is not used.

Note that if a missile is likely to fall in a sea area near Japan but outside its territorial waters (e.g., in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)), even though J-ALERT is not used, ships and aircraft are quickly warned thereof.

Q2. How is the information transmission actually done?

A2.

In case the government uses J-ALERT to transmit information, not only are municipal radios automatically activated and the warning is broadcasted over the loudspeakers of each municipality, but also Area Mails (for targeted areas) and emergency messages are sent to mobile phones.

For more information, please visit the website of the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (Japanese only):

http://www.fdma.go.jp/neuter/topics/fieldList2_1.html

[How to respond to a ballistic missile launch (before it lands or passes through)]

Q3. What to do if there is an information transmission saying that "a missile was launched"?

A3.

If the ballistic missile is likely to reach Japan, we transmit the information that the missile was launched and instruct people to evacuate.

When outdoors, take shelter in a building (if possible, a sturdy one) or

underground (underground facilities such as underground shopping arcades or subway stations) nearby.

When indoors, if there is a sturdier building or underground to where you can quickly evacuate, take shelter in that place immediately. If there is no such facility around, move as far away as possible from the windows or, if possible, to a room without windows.

Note that if it is expected that the missile is likely to fall on Japanese land or territorial waters, as soon as we detect this possibility, we will communicate that a missile is likely to fall and instruct people to immediately take shelter one more time.

Q4. What to do when there was an information transmission saying that “a missile is likely to fall”?

A4.

[When outdoors]

Take shelter in a building (if possible, a sturdy one) or underground nearby.

If there are no appropriate buildings, etc. nearby, hide under anything that may provide shelter or lie flat on the ground covering your head.

[When indoors]

Move as far away as possible from windows or, if possible, to a room without windows.

Q5. In what kind of building should I take shelter?

A5.

Take shelter in a building (sturdy buildings such as those made of concrete) or underground facilities such as underground shopping arcades or subway stations nearby.

Q6. Where should I look for shelter in case there are no sturdy buildings or underground facilities nearby?

A6.

Take shelter in any nearby building. If there is none, hide under anything that may provide shelter or lie flat on the ground covering your head.

Q7. Why is it better to take shelter in a building or underground?

A7.

Because taking shelter in a building (if possible, a sturdy one) or underground (underground facilities such as underground shopping arcades or subway stations) helps to avoid damage inflicted by the blast wave or broken window glass at the time of the impact.

Q8. What to do in case there are no buildings or underground facilities nearby?

A8.

Hide under anything that may provide shelter or lie flat on the ground covering your head in order to avoid damage inflicted by the blast wave or broken window glass at the time of the impact.

Q9. When looking for a shelter, do I have to evacuate to a building or underground facility designated as a shelter by the governor?

A9.

Take shelter in any building (if possible, a sturdy one) or underground nearby regardless of whether it is a designated shelter or not.

Q10. What to do if I am at home?

A10.

If there is a sturdier building or underground (underground facilities such as underground shopping arcades or subway stations) where you can quickly take shelter, evacuate to that place immediately. If you cannot,

stay home, move as far away as possible from windows or, if possible, to a room without windows.

Q11. Is there something I should pay attention to after taking shelter in a building?

A11.

Move as far away as possible from windows or, if possible, to a room without windows for avoiding damage inflicted by window glass broken by the blast wave.

Q12. What to do in case I am in a car when ballistic missile information is transmitted?

A12.

The gasoline in the car is highly flammable.

Park the car and take shelter in a building (if possible, a sturdy one) or underground (underground facilities such as underground shopping arcades or subway stations) nearby. If there are no buildings or underground facilities to take shelter around, move away from the car, and lie flat on the ground covering your head.

Q13. What to do if it is dangerous to get out of the car?

A13.

If you are driving on an expressway or somewhere else where it would be dangerous to get out of the car, park the car somewhere safe and, lowering your head, wait for further official information inside the car.

[How to respond to a ballistic missile launch (after the missile has landed or passed through)]

Q14. What to do when there was an information transmission saying that “the missile has possibly passed to XX at around X:XX”?

A14.

Gather information from the government on TV or the radio.

There is no need to stay in the shelter, but if you find any suspicious objects, do not approach, and report it to the police, fire department or the Japan Coast Guard.

Q15. What to do when there was an information transmission saying that “a missile has possibly landed in the area around XX City, XX Prefecture at around X:XX”?

A15.

Further information will be transmitted, so stay indoors and do not leave the shelter.

The damage inflicted, the response to it and other factors vary greatly according to the type of warhead.

Therefore, you should try to gather more information on TV, the radio or the internet.

Also, if there are any instructions from administrative agencies, follow them, stay calm and do what you have been instructed to do.

If a missile has landed nearby, although the extent of the damage area varies according to the type of warhead, follow the instructions below:

- When outdoors, cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief, and immediately move away from the impact zone, and take shelter in a well-sealed building or move upwind.
- When indoors, turn off ventilation systems, close windows, and seal up any openings to make the space as airtight as possible.

Q16. What kind of information is transmitted after the warning saying that “a missile has possibly landed in the area around XX City, XX Prefecture at around X:XX”?

A16.

Information transmission saying that there is no longer a need to take shelter, or instructing to stay in the shelter, or to evacuate to somewhere else, etc. will be transmitted according to the situation.

Q17. What to do when there was an information transmission saying that “the missile has possibly landed in the XX Sea at around X:XX”?

A17.

Gather information from the government on TV or the radio.

There is no need to stay in the shelter, but if you find any suspicious objects, do not approach, and report it to the police, fire department or the Japan Coast Guard.

[Information Transmission]

Q18. When is the Civil Protection Siren sound used?

A18.

In case J-ALERT is used, disaster management radio systems of each municipality are automatically activated broadcasting the warning over the loudspeakers outdoors. In this case, as a general rule, the siren sound used is the Civil Protection Siren sound.

For further information such as the locations of disaster management radio systems in each municipality, please contact the local authorities of the municipality in which you live.

Q19. Is the ringtone used for Area Mails (for targeted areas) or emergency messages transmitting missile information the same as the Civil Protection Siren sound?

A19.

No. It is the same ringtone used for Area Mails (for targeted areas) or emergency messages about tsunami, volcano eruption or other emergency situations. However, it is not the Civil Protection Siren sound. Please verify the sound for Area Mails and emergency messages for transmitting missile information on the websites (Japanese only) below:

NTT DOCOMO Area Mail (Disaster/Evacuation Information) web site
https://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/service/areamail/disaster_evacuation/index.html
au Emergency Mail (Disaster/Evacuation Information) web site
<https://www.au.com/mobile/anti-disaster/kinkyu-sokuho/saigai-hinan/>
Softbank Emergency Mail (Disaster/Evacuation Information) web site
http://www.softbank.jp/mobile/service/urgent_news/about/disaster_info/
Y!Mobile Emergency mail (Disaster/Evacuation Information) web site
http://www.ymobile.jp/service/urgent_mail/disaster_info/

Q20. How can I know if my mobile phone or smartphone receives Area Mails or emergency mails in case J-ALERT is activated?

A20.

Please contact your mobile phone company.

In case your mobile phone or smartphone cannot receive J-ALERT messages, you can program it to receive them in the following manner:

(1) Example of smart phone applications and email services provided by private businesses:

Yahoo Japan Corporation provides a free service called “Yahoo! Disaster Information” (Yahoo! bosai sokuho) which sends ballistic missile information, etc. through a smartphone application or a mobile phone message.

You can install the smartphone application or register your mobile phone email address at the URL bellow (Japanese only):

Yahoo! Disaster Information (Yahoo! bosai sokuho) (Japanese only)
<https://emg.yahoo.co.jp/>

(2) Email registry systems of local municipalities

Some prefectures and municipalities have implemented an email registry system for sending ballistic missile information, etc. to smart phone and mobile phone email addresses registered beforehand. Please check the homepage, etc. of the prefecture and municipality in which you live.

[Other]

Q21. How long would it take for a missile to reach Japan after launch?

A21.

In case a ballistic missile is launched from North Korea towards Japan, the missile is likely to reach Japan in an extremely short time.

For instance, a missile launched from near Tongchang-ri on the western coast of North Korea on February 7, 2016, passed through the skies of the Sakishima Islands in Okinawa (about 1,600km away from the launching site) approximately 10 minutes after the launch.

Note, however, that depending on the kind of missile and the launching site, the time it takes for a missile to fly from the launching site to Japan may vary.