



# New Emergency Warning Systems

I'm writing this column at noon on Friday, May 1. Outside, I hear siren blasts and a clear, loud voice announcing that Newport Beach is testing its new **Outdoor Warning Notification System**.

We now have two new emergency notification systems: one local and one state-wide. Newport Beach's **Outdoor Warning Notification System** is an upgraded version of the city's Tsunami warning sirens. The new system includes three strategically-installed speakers for broadcasting notification sirens and voice commands with preliminary information and instructions. The speakers are located at West Jetty View Park/Wedge, Marina Park on Balboa Boulevard, and West Newport Park, near 60th Street & Seashore Drive.

The speaker notification system will be used for all hazards or disasters where immediate action from the public is necessary. They will be tested each month on the first Friday at noon. If you hear the speaker notification system, and it's NOT the first Friday of the month, **turn on your television to channel 3 or radio to 107.9 KWVE** for further instructions and information.

At the state level, California now has an earthquake early warning Smartphone app called **MyShake**. MyShake will give Californians who download it, warnings from any corner of the state. Alerts on the MyShake app will be sent messages to areas expected to experience a shaking intensity of level 3 or above. (Level 3 is defined as "Felt quite noticeably by persons indoors, especially on upper floors of buildings. Many people do not recognize it as an earthquake. Standing motor cars may rock slightly. Vibrations similar to the passing of a truck.")

Warnings will also be sent by text message (similar to Amber Alerts) through the Wireless Emergency Alerts system. However, you should download the MyShake app if you can. Text alerts will be sent to people in places where the minimum intensity level will be somewhat higher, starting at 4. (Shaking level 4 is described as "Felt indoors by many, outdoors by few during the day. At night, some awakened. Dishes, windows, doors disturbed; walls make cracking sound. Sensation like heavy truck striking building. Standing motor cars rocked noticeably.") Those text message alerts will also be slower than the app because the system was designed for other types of emergencies where mere seconds don't make a big difference.

### **What can you do with a few seconds of warning?**

- o You can drop, cover and hold on.
- o Crews can shut down fuel pipelines pumping at high pressure.
- o Surgeons can remove their scalpels and shut off electric cauterizers to prevent fires.
- o Transit agencies could slow trains to reduce the chances of derailment.
- o Fire stations could make sure garage doors are open so firefighters can quickly get to emergencies.
- o Elevators could stop at the closest floor and open to let passengers out.

How reliable is the MyShake app? For now, we can expect false alarms and missed alerts. However, the consensus in countries like Japan and Mexico that have similar systems is that the potential life-saving benefit is worth any deficiencies.