DEAF WIRELESS CANADA COMMITTEE

COMITÉ POUR LES SERVICES SANS FIL DES SOURDS DU CANADA

Survey Analysis Report

Improving the Public Alerting System for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Canadians

TNC CRTC 2025-180-1

November 21, 2025

Acknowledgement

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Land Acknowledgement

"From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples that call this land home."

Acknowledgement

Project Leaders
Lisa Anderson, Project Co - Coordinator
Jessica Sergeant, Project Co - Coordinator

Appreciation

Huge appreciation to our Community Connectors. Their passion and drive truly powered these survey numbers. Their unstoppable commitment to accessibility made this success possible for DDBHH Canadians.

DWCC offers a massive thank-you for showing what community connection can achieve.

Community Connectors

DeafBlind - Christine “Coco” Roschaert
LSQ - Alice Dulude

BC/Alberta - Ladan Sahraei
Alberta - Crystal Jones
Saskatchewan - Shayla-Rae Tanner, Fatima Nafisa, Mustafa Alabssi, Rae-Mairi Richardson
Manitoba - Sheila Carlin-Montney
Ontario - Sage Lovell, Leah Riddell
Nova Scotia - Betty MacDonald, Marty Van Den Heuvel
New Brunswick - William Blakney, Abigail Blakney
Newfoundland and Labrador - Deborah Brawley

Introduction - About DWCC

DEAF WIRELESS CANADA COMMITTEE

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Deaf Wireless Canada **Consultative** Committee (**DWCC**) advocates for the full inclusion of diverse members within the Canadian Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) community in Canadian society.

1. The spectrum of DDBHH life experiences, including those that are Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+, and range from those with cognitive delay or have neurodiversity, immigrants learning English or French as a second language, those with various degrees of hearing loss, those with the unique “double” disability as Deaf-Blind, and finally native ASL/LSQ users.

1. Additionally, **DWCC** supports that Indigenous have the right to ask for support, including requesting Indigenous Sign Language interpreters. **When DWCC writes DDBHH, it is inclusive of all those with intersectional identities.**

DDBHH Ordering

3. DDBHH is intentionally written in this order, based on guidance from the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind (CNSDB) since its collaboration with DWCC during the TNC 2016-116 proceeding. The term *Deaf-Blind* is a deliberate choice, as individuals who self-identify as Deaf-Blind generally align culturally with the Deaf community rather than the Hard of Hearing community. Therefore, and as directed by the appropriate Canadian Deaf-Blind authority (CNSDB), the order must remain as *DDBHH*.

Deaf-Blind or DeafBlind?

4. Across Canada, spelling and terminology for DeafBlind vary by region.

- In British Columbia and some organizations (e.g., DBPC, Well-Being Program, CNSDB), “Deaf-Blind” is preferred.
- In Alberta and other provinces, the single-word “DeafBlind” is more common.
- Both forms describe the same experience and reflect language evolution and regional identity.
- For this report, “DeafBlind” is used.

Indigenous wording

5. DWCC uses DDBHH (Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing) with an intersectional lens, including Indigenous individuals while respecting self-determination and cultural autonomy.

- Guided by our Indigenous Deaf consultant: **“Indigenous people are Indigenous first before Deaf.”**
- DWCC encourages consistent, respectful terminology that honours self-identification and lived experience.

Indigenous Deaf

Introduction - Mandate

6. DWCC-CSSSC is a group of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing consultants, analysts and committee volunteers across Canada.

7. DWCC's mandate is to advocate for equality for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Canadians in wireless telecommunications as in:

a. Cost reasonable accessible wireless data plans for ASL and LSQ users for two-way video calls.
b. Accessible industry-wide promotions of wireless services and products.
c. Removal of disparities in costs of the same accessible wireless products and services within each company.
d. Provision of functional equivalent wireless products and services including wireless applications (apps).
e. Accessible wireless emergency services (including emergency alerts and direct text to 911).
f. Nationwide public awareness, education and outreach on current accessible wireless and mobile communication products and services.

Definitions - Sign Languages

8. Sign Languages: a naturally occurring visual gestural language with distinct grammar, syntax and vocabulary that is not based on or derived from a spoken language.

9. In Canada we have:

ASL - American Sign Language
Widely used sign language in Canada and USA

LSQ - Langue des signes québécoise
Natural language sign language of the Deaf Francophone community in Canada, regions that use this are: Quebec, New Brunswick, specific areas of Ontario

ISL - Indigenous Sign Languages
Natural sign language of the Deaf indigenous nations

United Nations International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL) on September 23rd

Definitions - DDBHH People

10. Culturally Deaf (D) – People who are born Deaf or become Deaf early in life, usually before language acquisition (pre-lingual). They primarily use sign language to communicate and often attend Deaf residential schools. Deafness is seen as a cultural and linguistic identity rather than a disability, with a preference for sign language interpreters and visual assistive technology.

11. DeafBlind (DB) – People with is a dual sensory disability where neither hearing nor vision can fully compensate for the other. It varies from partial to total loss in both senses. Communication methods include tactile signing, close-up signing, or speech reading, depending on individual identity.

12. Hard of Hearing (HH) – People with hearing loss ranging from mild to profound, either from birth or developed later. They primarily rely on residual hearing, using assistive devices like hearing aids, cochlear implants (mostly deafened), and captioning services. Most identify with hearing culture and some use sign language.

13. Separated Reports: For this proceeding, DWCC has separated the results for Deaf and Hard of hearing into two different survey reports considering the historic numbers of DeafBlind respondents. **This report focuses only on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing respondents experiences and perspectives.**

Definitions - DDBHH People

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Hearing Disabilities as of 2022

14. 5.6% or **1.6 million** Canadians have hearing disabilities (those over 15 years of age and all gender identities in one category)

15. By comparison, **22%** of Canadians or **6.2 million** people had one or more disabilities in 2017.

Source: **Statistics Canada Hearing Disabilities Infographic**

Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing Statistics

Deaf Population Estimate

16. Calculations using the .001 formula to based on total Canadian population of the current estimated 41 million, about **410,000** cannot use voice calls, and **41,000** use ASL, LSQ or Indigenous Sign Languages.

17. **Nearly 50%** of Canadians over 65 have some hearing loss.

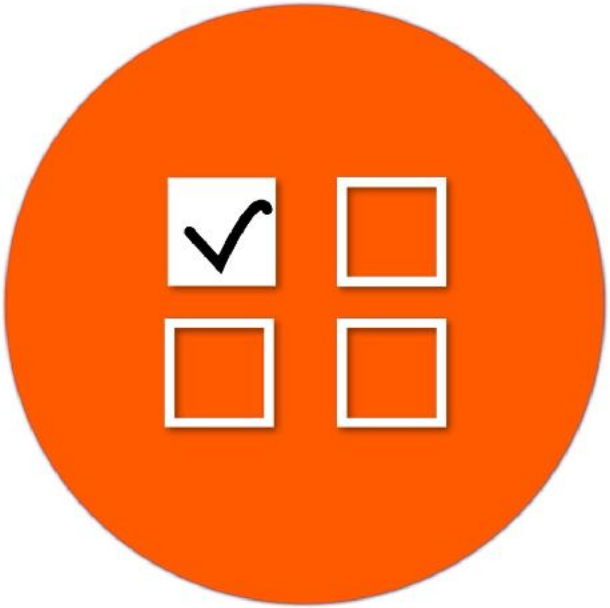
Source: [Statistics Canada]

Project Summary Overview

18. DWCC presents the survey analysis results for the Telecommunications Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-180 concerning improvements to the National Public Alerting System and accessibility in emergency communications.

19. DWCC conducted this **survey to gather evidence** and amplify the perspectives of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) Canadians regarding emergency alerting.

20. This report examines the experiences of **1,204 Deaf and Hard of Hearing** individuals across Canada in receiving, understanding, and responding to public alerts, as well as the accessibility barriers they face within the current National Public Alerting System (NPAS).



Barrier-free Communication

21. Passed in **June 2019**, the **Accessible Canada Act (ACA)** mandates a barrier-free Canada, ensuring equitable access for **DDBHH** Canadians.

22. American Sign Language, Langue des signes québécoise, Indigenous Sign Languages are recognized as the primary languages for communication by Deaf persons in Canada.

Source: ACA Act Infographic (2019)

Accessibility Requirements for ICT *

23. Accessibility Standards Canada published **CAN/ASC** accessibility requirements for **ICT products and services**, including **video sign language communication**.

24. These standards cover captioning technology and real-time text, requiring **wireless service providers (WSPs), internet service providers (ISPs), and all telecommunications service providers (TSPs) to comply.**

25. This ensures that video sign language communication, captioning, and real-time text are integrated into ICT products and services.

* ICT = Information and Communications Technology

Accessibility in Telecommunications

Barrier-free Telecommunications

26. The **ACA** ensures federally regulated telecom providers remove barriers, including in wireless and internet services.

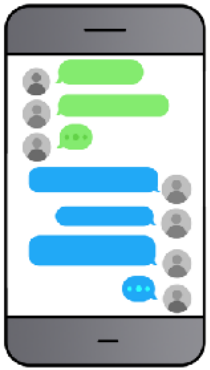
27. Providers must establish accessibility plans and feedback mechanisms, consulting individuals with disabilities. Through these actions, the ACA can transform Canada's telecommunications industry into a more inclusive space, ensuring equitable access to information and communication for all.

CRTC's Accessibility Role

28. The **CRTC** enforces accessibility rules in telecom and broadcasting under the **ACA**, requiring service providers to offer accessibility plans, feedback processes, and progress reports.

29. The Act sets a legal framework to proactively identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility in federally regulated sectors, including telecommunications. **In this context, the terminology should be interpreted to include wireless and internet services.**

30. The **2023 Policy Direction** strengthens CRTC oversight while awaiting updates to the outdated **Telecommunications Act**.



Updated Policy Direction 2023

31. In the Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on a Renewed Approach to Telecommunications Policy (SOR/2023-23), accessibility provisions from the 2019 Policy Direction are carried forward and reinforced in the 2023 version to ensure they are neither overlooked nor diminished.

32. Specifically, accessibility has been strengthened and explicitly mandated in items **2d** and **17c** of the current directive.

33. The wording is as follows on next two slides:

34. Key Objectives

2. The Commission should consider how its decisions would promote competition, affordability, consumer interests, and innovation, in particular, the extent to which they would:

d. Enhance and protect the rights of consumers in their relationships with telecommunications service providers, **including rights related to accessibility.**

EQUAL RIGHTS

Updated Policy Direction 2023 - Consumer Rights

35. Approach to Consumer Matters

17. The Commission must enhance and protect the rights of consumers in telecommunications markets by:

c. Proactively identifying, removing, and preventing barriers relating to telecommunications services, in particular for persons with disabilities.

Project Rationale

36. After reviewing the Neil Squire report,[1] **DWCC** recognized the need for the Commission to receive deeper insights from Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Canadians. DWCC is participating in **CRTC 2025-180** to provide these critical perspectives and recommendations for improving the National Public Alerting System.

37. DWCC's survey analysis submission draws on the **direct experiences and feedback as evidence** from Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) Canadians, ensuring that accessibility and inclusive communication are prioritized throughout the development of regulatory improvements to public alerting.

DWCC identified that the proceeding could benefit from a deeper dive into DDBHH accessibility considerations.

Neil Squire Report(2024) Accessible Emergency Alerts Survey Results Report - **Link**

Project Rationale - cont'd

38. The CRTC launched this proceeding to strengthen consumer protections by improving the accessibility, reach, and effectiveness of Canada's public alerting system.

39. Key issues under review include:

a. Review the accessibility of the system for persons with disabilities
b. Facilitate the dissemination of alerts in both official languages
c. Explore expanding the system to include Indigenous and additional languages
d. Address potential wireless public alerting gaps across the country
e. Review the existing public alerting test schedule
f. Determine improved methods for the Commission to monitor and validate that LMDs are meeting their public alerting requirements

Community Connectors - Driving National Participation

40. To ensure robust and equitable national participation in its emergency alert accessibility survey, the Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee (DWCC) adopted a Community Connector model.

41. This approach was designed to help achieve a reach **goal of 1,000** survey respondents, ensuring the results meaningfully reflect the experiences and needs of DDBHH Canadians nationwide.

42. The rationale for this approach is as follows:

a. **Local Representation:** Community Connectors are visible, trusted contacts in their provinces, leveraging relationships in local DDBHH networks. Their presence bridges trust gaps and fosters genuine engagement over centralized outreach.

b. **Peer-to-Peer Engagement and Motivation:** Connectors motivate peers through personal outreach and support, boosting participation—especially among groups often underrepresented in surveys.

Community Connectors - Driving National Participation

42c.Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusion: Connectors understand the accessibility needs and communication styles of their local DDBHH communities. They help ensure survey information is shared in formats that suit local preferences, including sign language and plain language.

42d. Maximizing Reach: Community Connectors use in-person outreach, social media, and local events to include rural, senior, and offline DDBHH Canadians—ensuring broader, equitable survey coverage.

42e.National Coordination with Local Flexibility: By working with a national network of Connectors, DWCC can share best practices, address emerging challenges, and adapt strategies in real time. Central coordination, led by a project coordinator, provides updates and support, while Connectors retain flexibility to respond to local realities. This combination of national oversight and local adaptability maximizes both participation rates and accessibility outcomes.

Internal Survey

43. After completing their outreach activities, the Community Connectors were invited to take part in an internal survey developed by our Junior Consultant.

44. Their feedback provided valuable insight into both their experiences and the challenges encountered during the project.

45. A summary of these internal survey results will be included in the Appendix

46. The Connectors input informed the perspectives of the Project Challenges and Survey Challenges.

Project Challenges

47. Despite careful planning, several overarching obstacles affected the project's overall reach and effectiveness:

48. Timing: Project activities and outreach overlapped with major Deaf community events, reducing visibility and engagement.

49. Outreach: Reliance on online outreach limited participation among seniors and DeafBlind individuals, rural and those without reliable internet.

50. Technical Barriers: Issues with accessibility tools (Braille displays, screen readers, device compatibility) affected rural and DeafBlind users.

51.Engagement Strategies: In-person events, visual flyers, and local outreach proved more effective than online approaches.

52.Pre-launch Testing: Lack of comprehensive survey accessibility testing before public release led to usability issues.

Survey Challenges

53. Participants also encountered a range of specific challenges related to the survey's design, delivery, and clarity:

54. Survey Length & Complexity: The 38-question survey required significant time and concentration, creating barriers for many, especially DeafBlind participants participation.

55. Language Accessibility: Some video links (ASL, LSQ, French) were missing or inaccurate, impacting comprehension.

56. Technical Glitches: Dropdown menus inaccessible to assistive technology; video buffering issues affected completion when participating within rural areas.

57.Clarity of Purpose: Respondents were sometimes confused about how the survey linked to the public alerting proceeding, affecting credibility.

Success of Community Connectors

58. 1,355 survey respondents would not have been possible without the **19 Community Connectors** within 9 provinces as well as a national DeafBlind Connector.

59. A total of **37 vlogs** and video messages were created by the Community Connectors, and every video was shared by each other of the Connectors, and on DWCC Facebook Page. This created a large national dissemination outreach. Of the 37 videos, **a total of 30 were created in ASL.**

60. Quebec's Community Connector shared 5 LSQ outreach videos via NoveLSQ,(2K followers). The DeafBlind Connector produced 2 additional LSQ videos, including one bilingual for New Brunswick, for a **total of 7 LSQ videos distributed.**

61. There was active cross-sharing, teamwork, and supportive banter while sharing across provinces and communities. It was a great example of nation-building in action.

Methodology: Timeline

62. After the survey questions were developed. the survey was distributed through multiple channels, primarily social media, with a strong presence on **Facebook.** Promotional materials included images and ASL videos explaining the survey's purpose and encouraging participation with the prize of a smartphone.

63. The survey was actively promoted for CRTC 2025-180 from **August 27 to September 30, 2025**, with daily posts and ASL and LSQ videos by the Community Connectors.

64. To ensure **equality and inclusion** of the DeafBlind community participation, the survey was kept open to give these respondents equal opportunity to participate, and then closed the survey with sufficient survey respondents on **October 5, 2025.**

65. This methodology ensured a structured, accessible, and widely distributed survey, gathering valuable insights for the **CRTC 2025-180** proceeding.

Quantitative Survey Design

66. To support **TNC CRTC 2025-180**, the team analyzed proceeding questions and identified gaps in accessibility. Additional questions were developed to ensure an **inclusive focus** while aligning with the proceedings intent.

67. A set of **36** questions were developed with initial qualifying questions and demographic questions before delving into the related proceeding questions.

68. The survey design was broken into these sections:

PART I: Qualifying Questions
PART II: Demographics

- About You
- Residential Information

PART III: Device and Service Usage

PART IV: National Public Alerting System (Emergency Alerts)

- Personal Experience
- Test Emergency Alerts
- Emergency Alerts Accessibility

PART V: Languages in Emergency Alerts

PART VI: Real Life Experiences

- Interest in participating in an interview

PART VII: Your Comments

PART VIII: To Enroll in the Draw – Optional

Methodology: Survey Design

69. There were both English and French survey versions with one link with ASL or LSQ:

a. **ASL or LSQ embedded survey** – English or French questions with ASL video translations embedded
b. **English-only or French-only Survey** – Standard text-based survey
c. **Deaf-Blind Accessible Survey** – High contrast, dark background with contrasting text colors

70. Out of **1,355** total respondents completed the survey questions.

a. **1,204** Deaf and Hard of Hearing completed
b. **151** DeafBlind completed

71. After reaching **151 DeafBlind survey participants**, results were separated into two reports. This report focuses on the **1,204 responses** from Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants.

Historical Context: Building a Public Alerting System

Laying the Groundwork for Canada's Public Alerting System

71. Historically, Canada's modern public alerting system emerged in the early 2000s with the creation of the **National Alert Aggregation and Dissemination (NAAD) System**, operated by Pelmorex.

72. Early alerting was designed primarily for radio, TV, and broadcasters, with **audio-first delivery**, meaning DDBHH audiences were not considered in system design.

73. Wireless alerts (WPA/Wireless Public Alerting) came later (2018), still **audio-driven**, with limited text format and no sign language or tactile options.

74. This report will inform the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Canadians' experience and perspectives with the existing emergency public alerting system.

Highlights

Demographics Highlights

Self Identity
- **83%** self-identify as Deaf
- **13%** as hard of hearing
- **2%** as oral deaf
- **2%** as late-deafened

Gender
- **67%** identify as female
- **29%** as male
- **1%** as non-binary

Age ranges
- **26%** age range of 55-64
- **23%** age range of 45-54
- **22%** age over 65

Provinces
- **35%** from Ontario
- **19%** from British Columbia
- **15%** from Quebec

Residence
- **56%** reside in metropolitan areas
- **28%** live in a population of 2,500 to 50,000

Languages
- **82%** use ASL
- **63%** use English
- **16%** use LSQ
- **11%** use French

Total Respondents 1,204

Service & Device Usage Highlights

Service Usage

- **87%** DHH respondents have both Wireless and Internet access
- **61%** of respondents do not have a wireless accessibility plan
- Of that 61%, **38%** is unaware such a plan exists, while **23%** know about it but have not adopted one

Device Usage

- Devices that DHH respondents own to receive or not receive public alerts:
  - **72%** own an Apple iPhone
  - **26%** own Android smartphones
  - **23%** own a tablet

Personal Experience Highlights

Public Alerts

- **86%** DHH respondents have both received a public alert:
- Alert selections indicated:
  - **29%** were AMBER alerts
  - **25%** were test alerts
  - **19%** were weather alerts
- **65%** want to be able to review past public alerts

Real Life

- **52%** DHH respondents have been in a location where there was an emergency event
- The public alerts were for:
  - **29%** AMBER
  - **25%** weather
  - **19%** natural disaster

Test Public Alerts Highlights

- **81%** DHH respondents have received a test public alert
- **77%** want to give feedback on a test public alert
- Preferred ways to submit feedback:
    - **25%** by clicking a button on the alert notification
    - **19%** email
    - **15%** text messaging

- Rationale to submit feedback:
    - **18%** to ensure alerts are delivered in accessible
    - **17%** to raise awareness of accessibility issues
    - **14%** to verify that alerts are effective for DHH Canadians

Barriers to Accessibility Highlights

- **56%** DHH respondents indicated that the current public alerting system is not fully accessible
- Barriers to DHH accessibility are in three major areas:
  - technical/delivery area issues
  - accessibility features
  - comprehension

- Three major barriers to DHH accessibility are:
  - **58%** stated alerts are unavailable in ASL or LSQ
  - **46%** indicated no visual alerts
  - **31%** reported insufficient details

Barrier-free Accessibility Highlights

- Accessibility features selected by DHH respondents were:
  - **22%** text captions
  - **21%** videos in ASL or LSQ
  - **19%** vibration alerts

- Four most accessible formats of public alerts for DHH respondents are:
  - **79%** text captions
  - **75%** ASL or LSQ videos
  - **69%** vibration alerts
  - **59%** flashing lights alerts

Information Content Highlights

- **39%** of DHH respondents were dissatisfied with the information provided in public alerts

- Information requirement selections indicated:
  - **13%** ASL or LSQ video explanation
  - **10%** links to shelter and safety information
  - **10%** plain language description of the emergency

Language Accessibility Highlights

Language Preferences

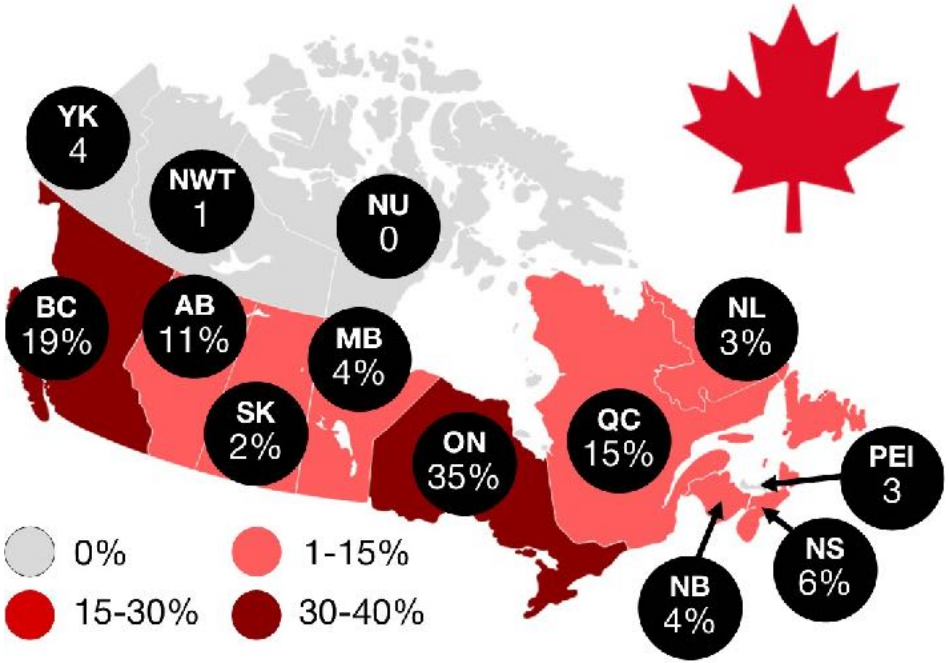
- **54%** of language preference selections made by DHH respondents for receiving public alerts were signed languages, followed by **46%** in written languages.

Sign Language Access

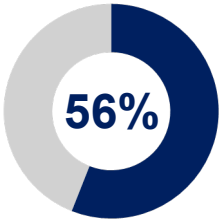
- **90%** DHH respondents support a federal requirement to include sign language in all public alerts
- **93%** believe that sign language should be available in public alerts across all platforms

Demographics

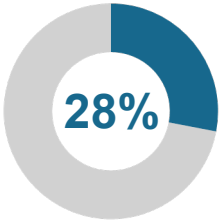
1,204 DHH Respondents



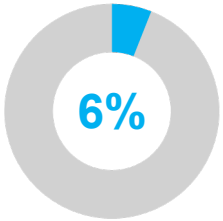
City / Town Residence



Population of 50,000+

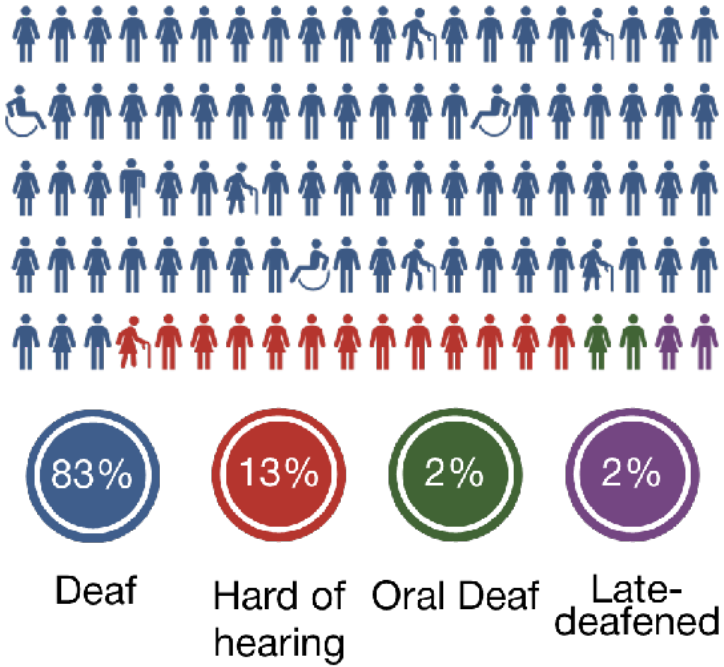


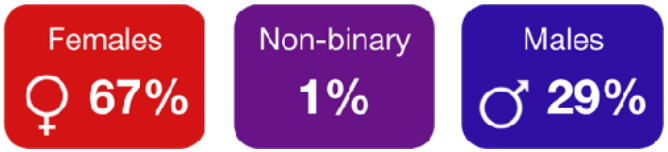
Population of 2,500-50,000

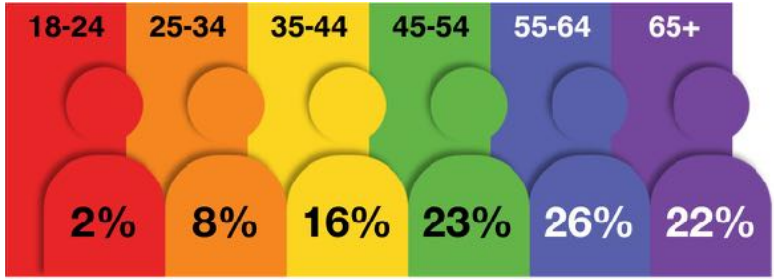


Population of less than 2,500

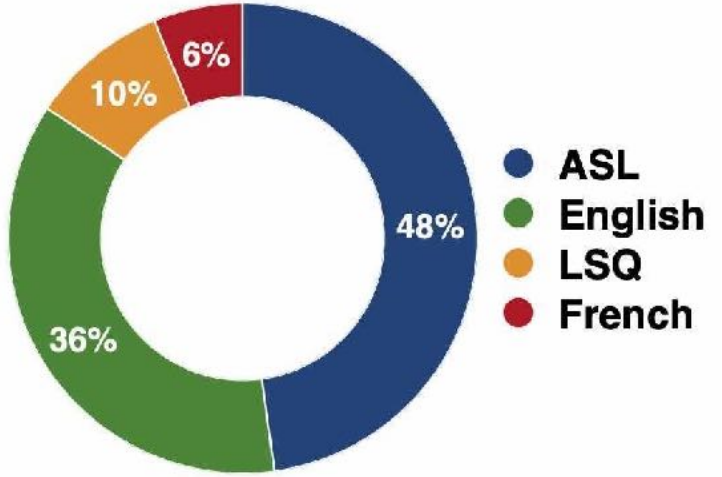
Profile of Respondents



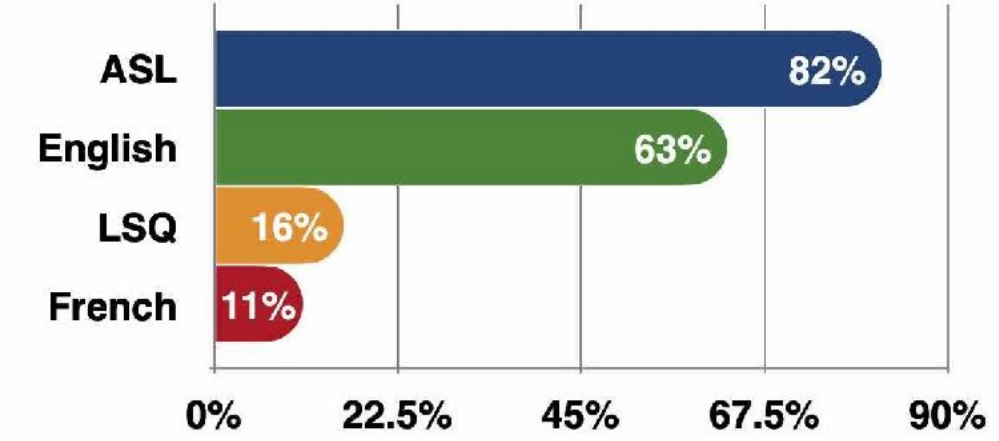




Language - Signed and Written



2,015 responses from DHH respondents



82% use ASL

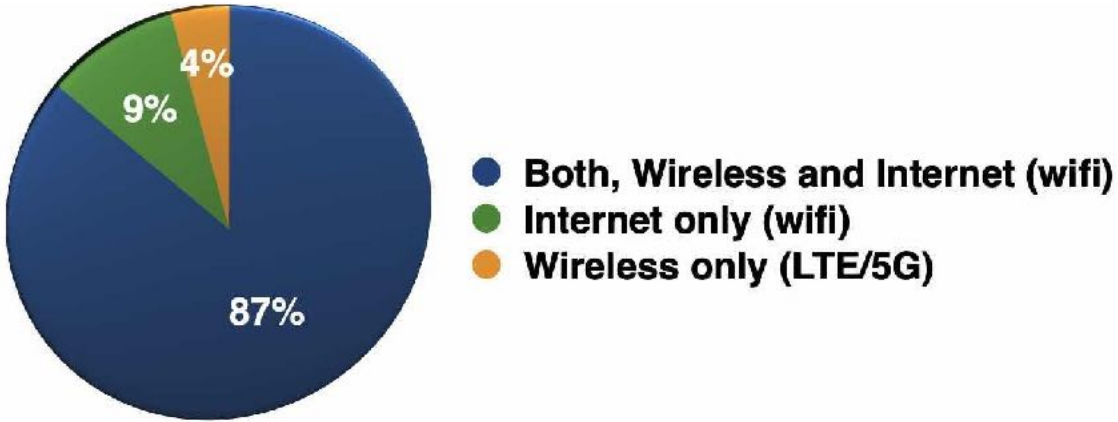
16% use LSQ

63% use English

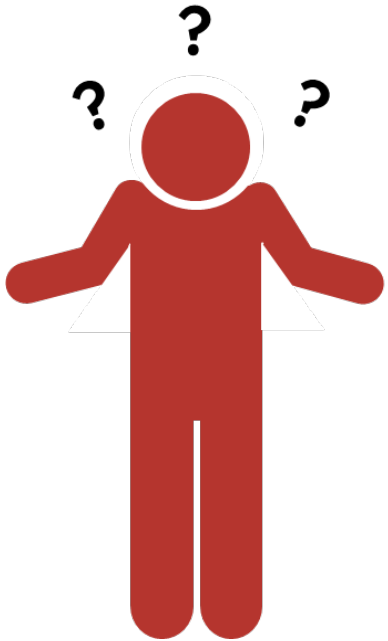
11% use French

Service and Device Usage

9 in 10 or **87%** DHH respondents have both Wireless and Internet access.



More than half (61%) DHH respondents
do not have a wireless accessibility plan.



Wireless Accessibility Plan

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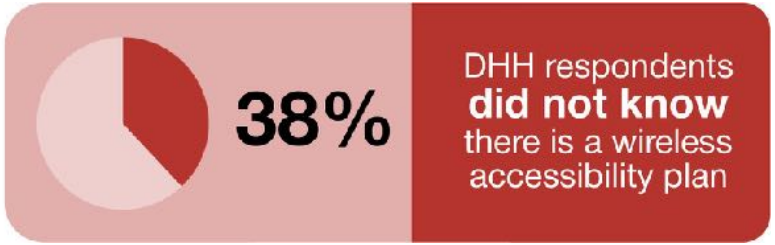
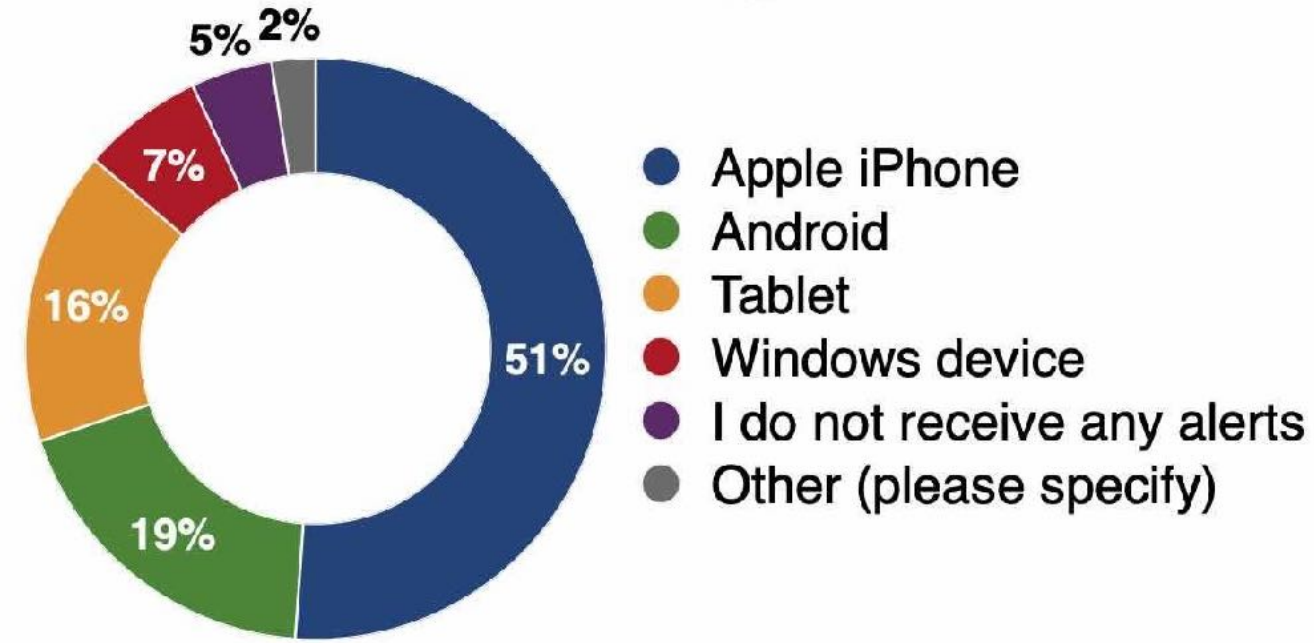


Device Usage

Responses from DHH respondents indicated they own either an **Apple iPhone**, an **Android**, or a **tablet** which they use to receive or are unable to receive public alerts.



1,592 responses from DHH respondents

Device Usage

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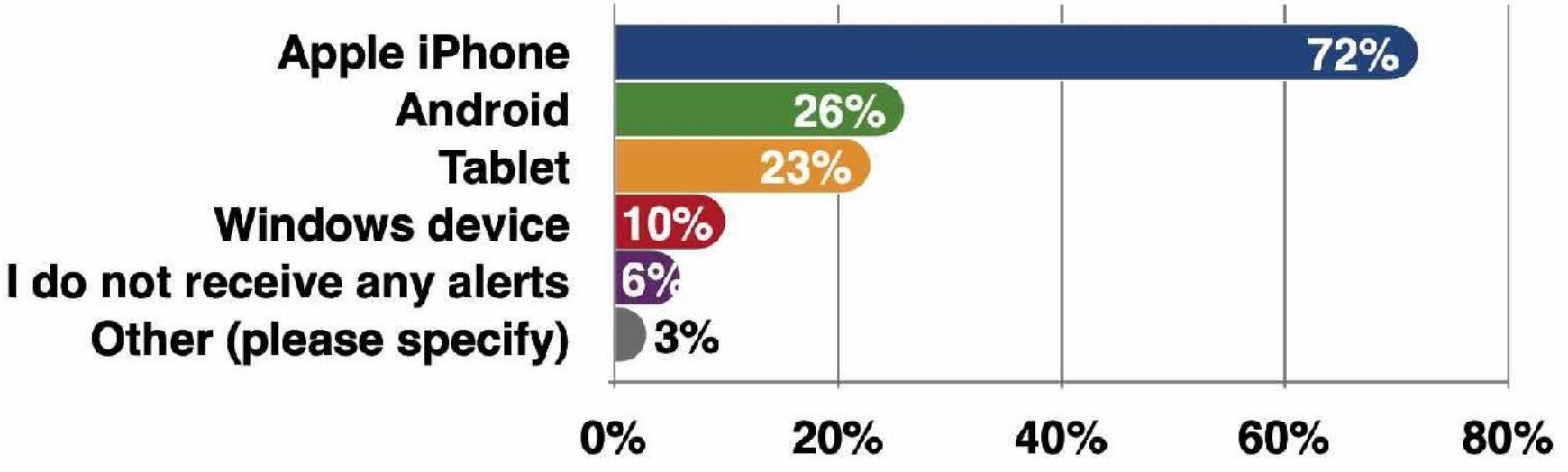
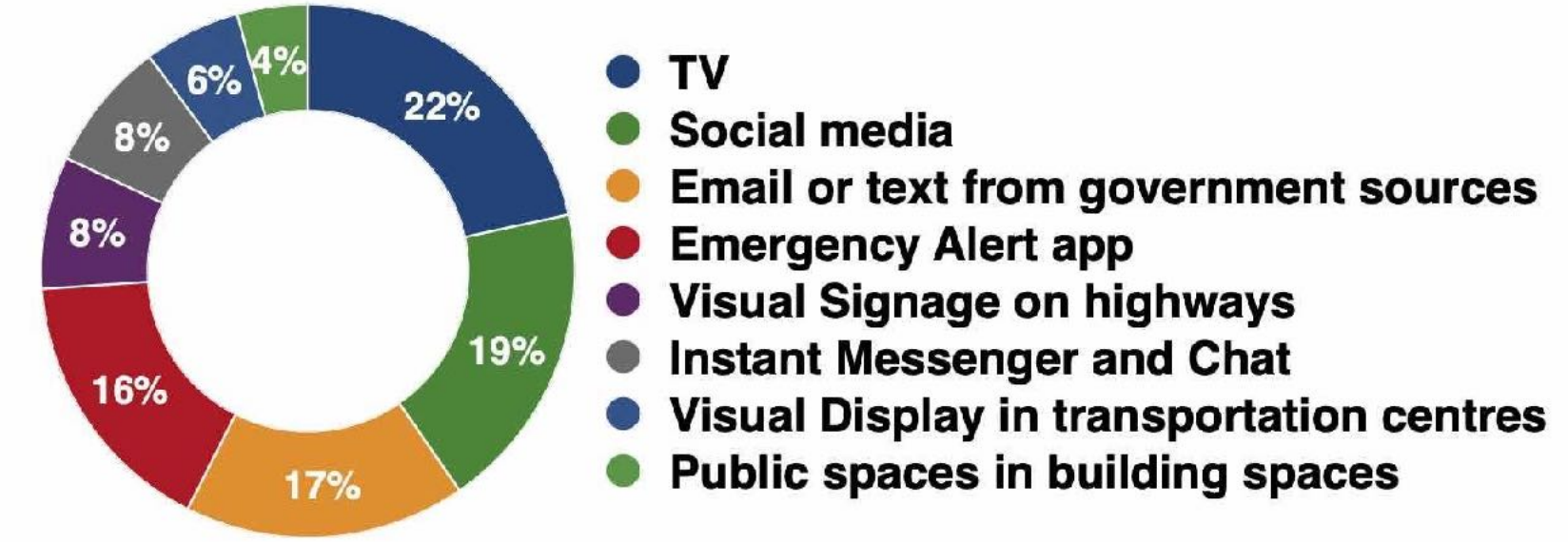


Other Platforms Used

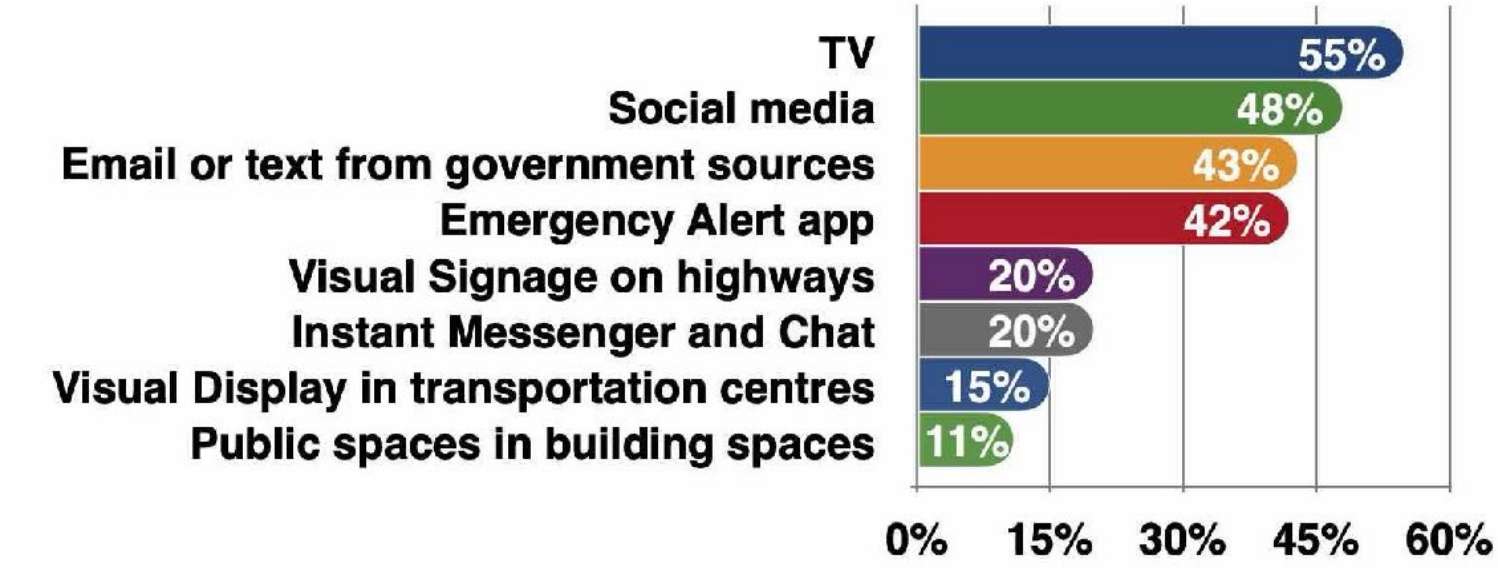
Responses from DHH respondents indicated they receive public alerts from are **Environmental Systems** and **Direct Communication Systems**.



2,860 responses from DHH respondents

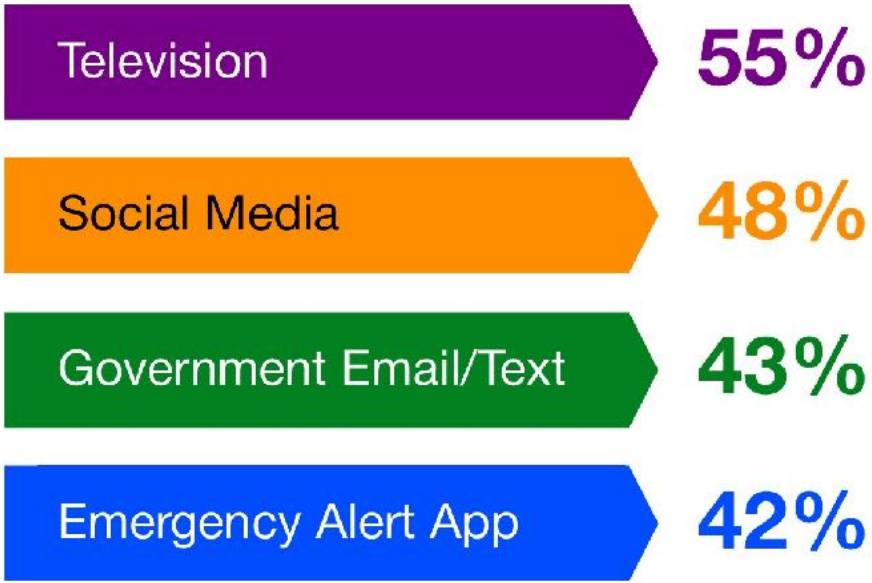
Other Platforms Used

Other platforms through which DHH respondents receive public alerts include **television, email or text messages,** and **social media**.



Other Platforms Used

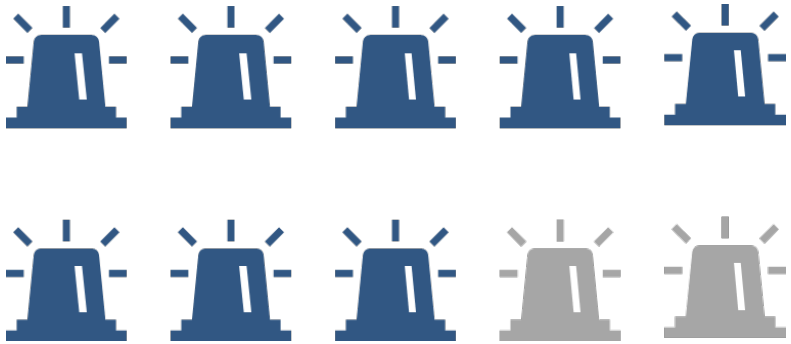
Top 4 other platforms DHH respondents use to receive public alerts.

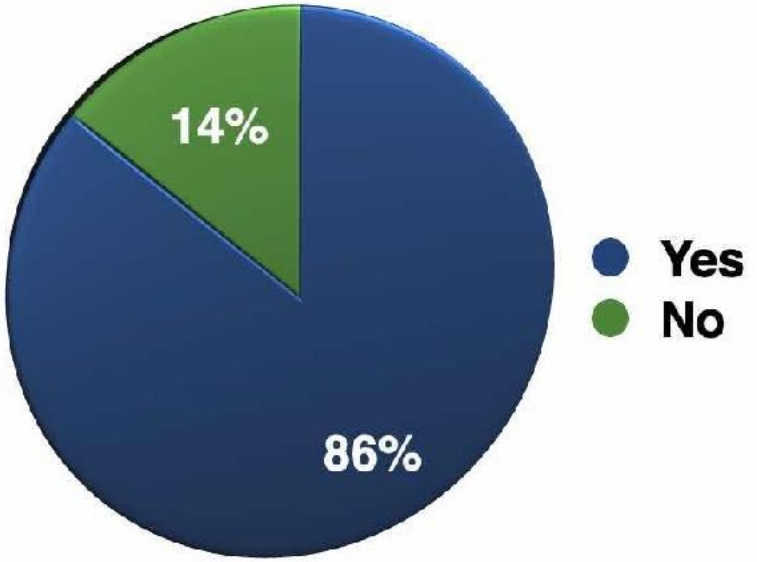


Personal Experience

Personal Experience - Public Alerts

More than **8 in 10 (86%)** DHH respondents have received a public alert.





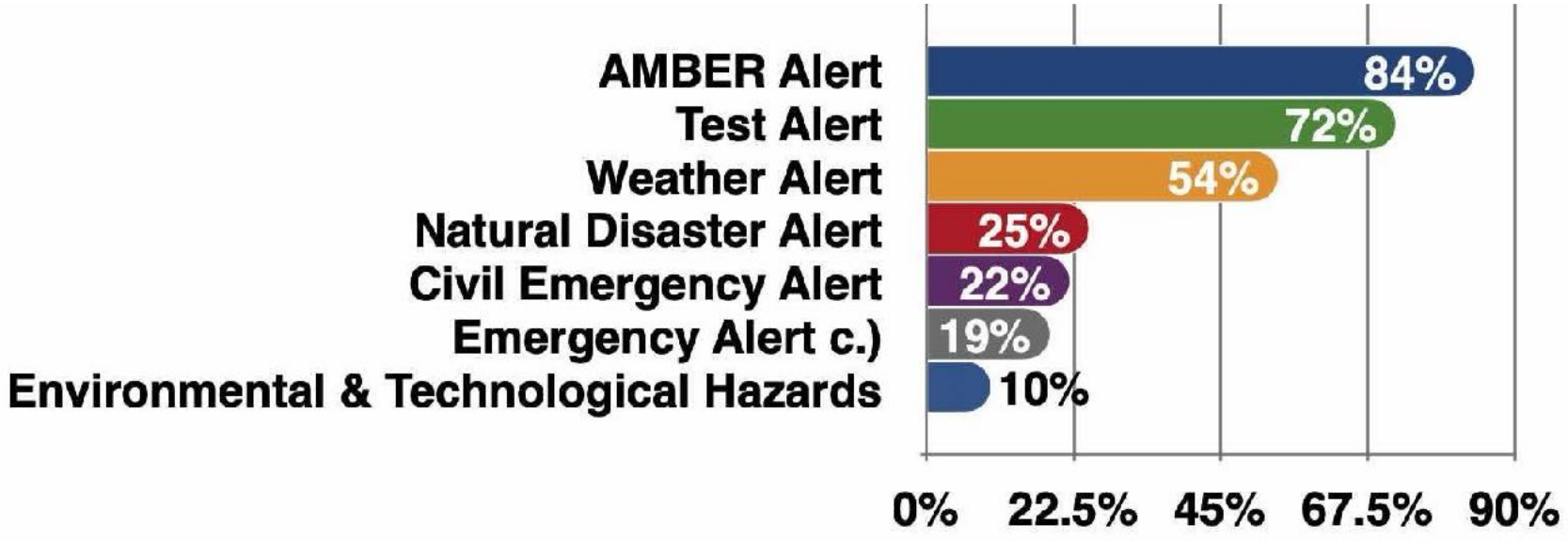
Personal Experience - Public Alerts

Responses from DHH respondents indicated that they most often receive public alerts related to **AMBER alerts**, **system test**, and **weather emergencies**.

2,736 responses from DHH respondents

Personal Experience - Public Alerts

DHH respondents most often receive public alerts related to **AMBER alerts**, **system test**, and **weather emergencies**.



TOP 4

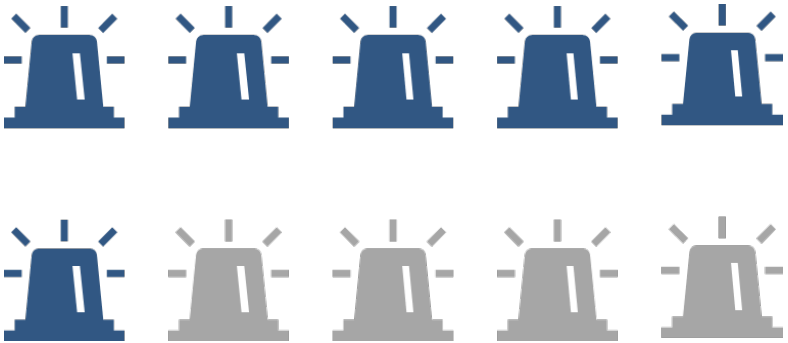
TYPE OF ALERTS

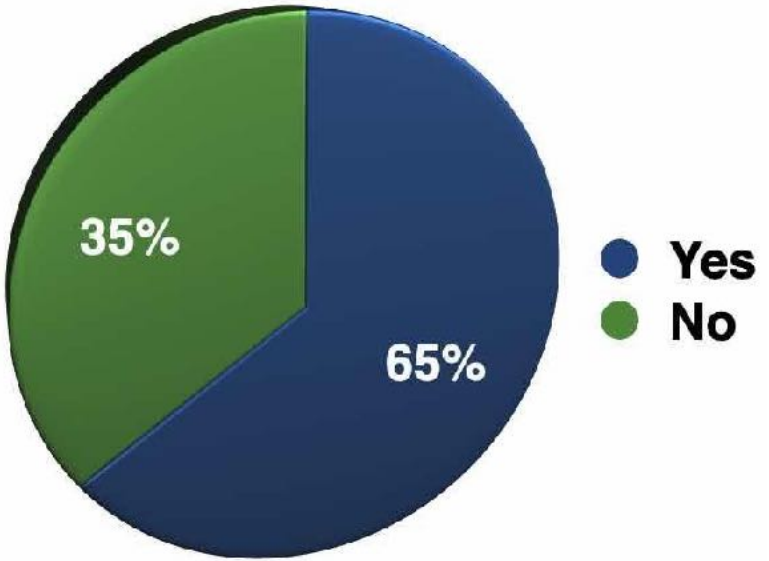
DHH RESPONDENTS HAVE RECEIVED IN THE PAST

1. AMBER Alert
2. Test Alert
3. Weather Alert
4. Natural Disaster Alert

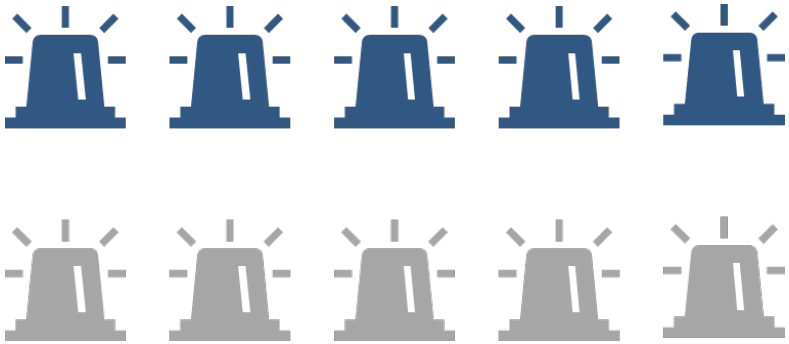
Personal Experience - Past Alerts

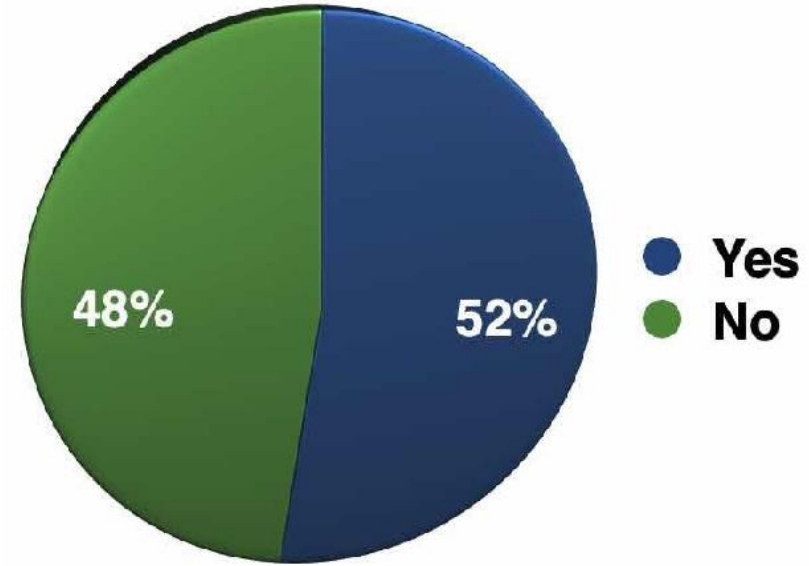
More than **6 in 10 (65%)** DHH respondents want to be able to review past public alerts.





More than **5 in 10 (52%)** DHH respondents have been in a location where there was an emergency event.





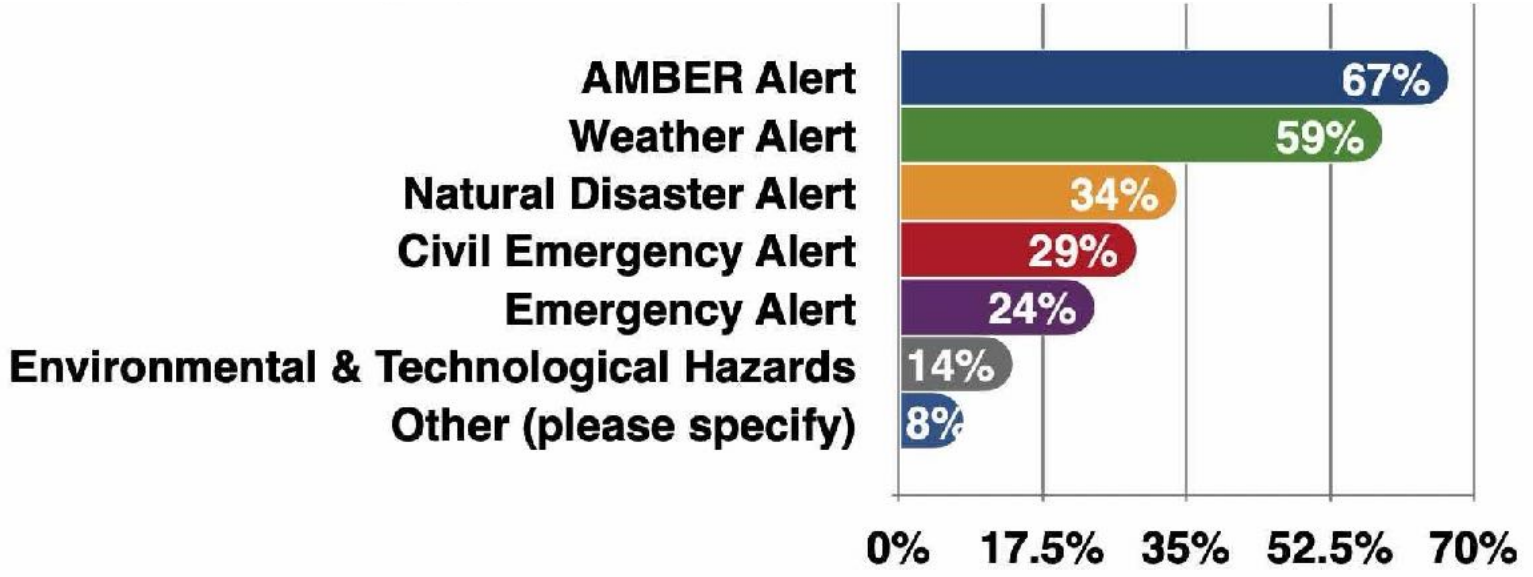
Personal Experience - Real Life

68% of responses from DHH respondents indicated that they received public alert warnings of **child abductions**, **weather emergencies**, and **natural disasters**.

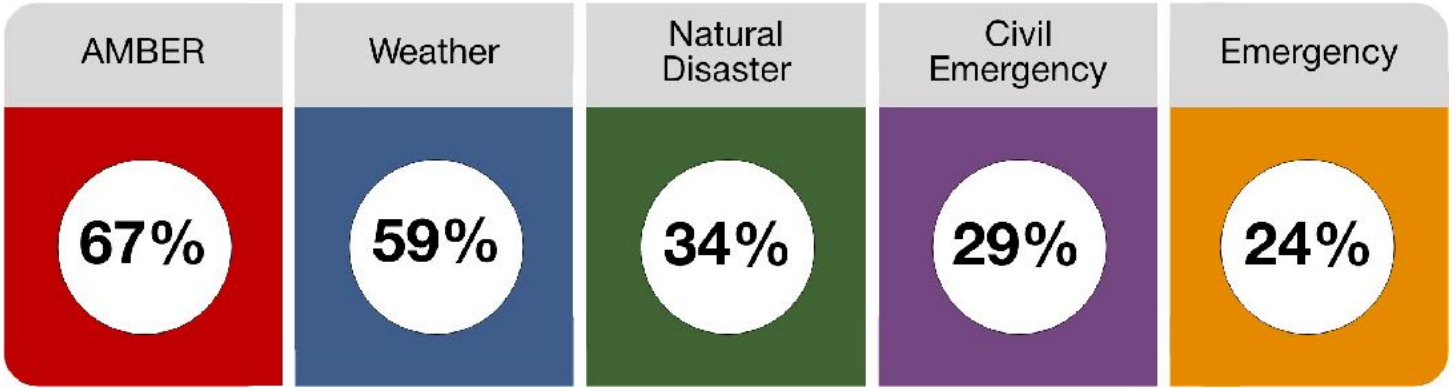
2,292 responses from DHH respondents

Personal Experience - Real Life

DHH respondents most often receive public alert warnings related to **child abductions**, **weather emergencies**, and **natural disasters**.



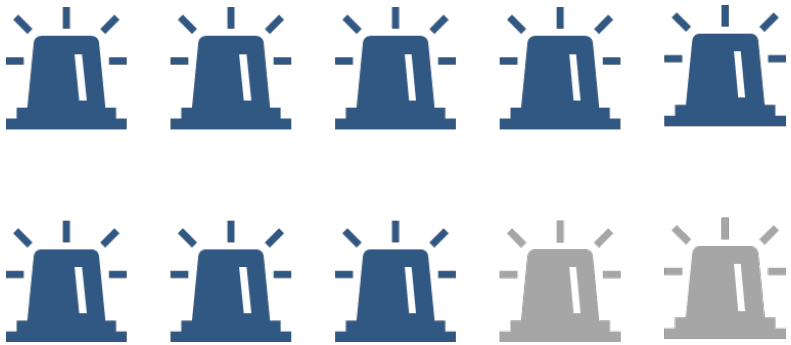
5 most common public alert experiences DHH respondents have.

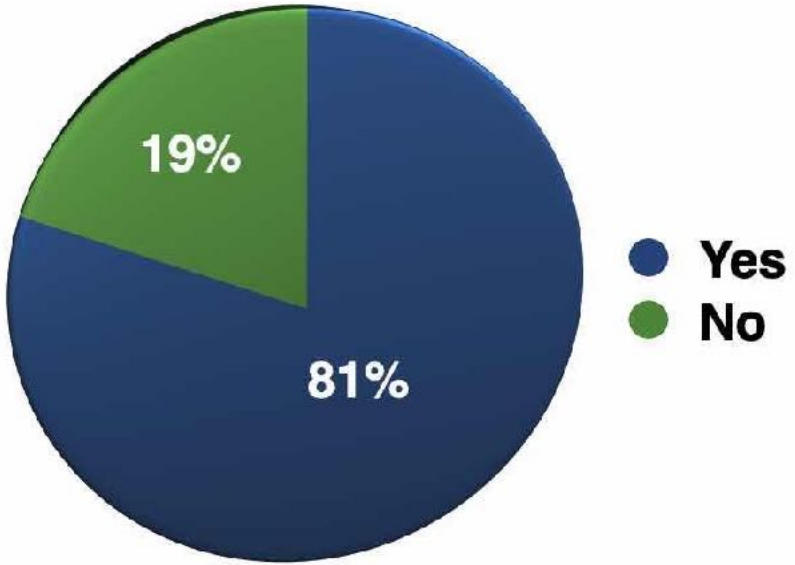


Test Public Alerts

Receiving a Test Public Alert

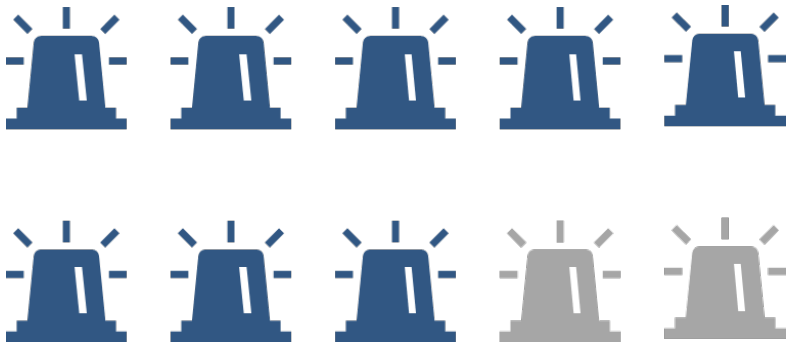
More than **8 in 10 (81%)** DHH respondents have received a test public alert.

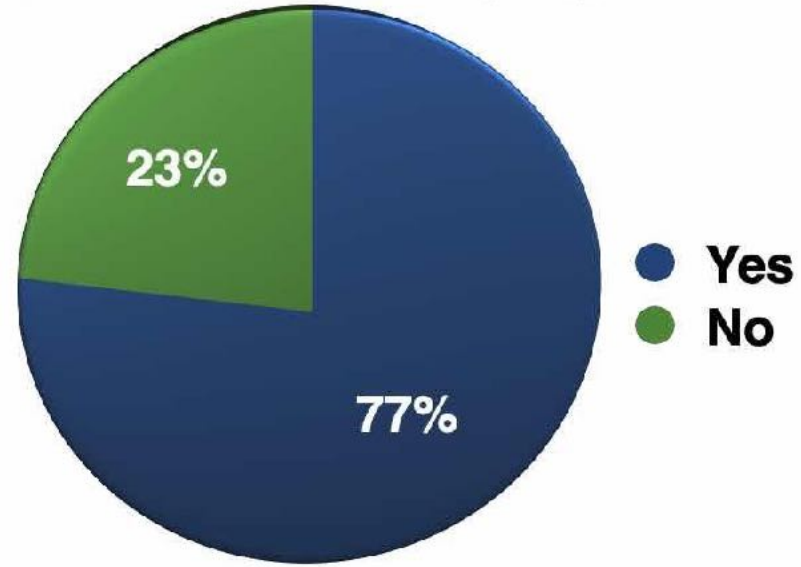




Submitting Feedback on Test Public Alerts

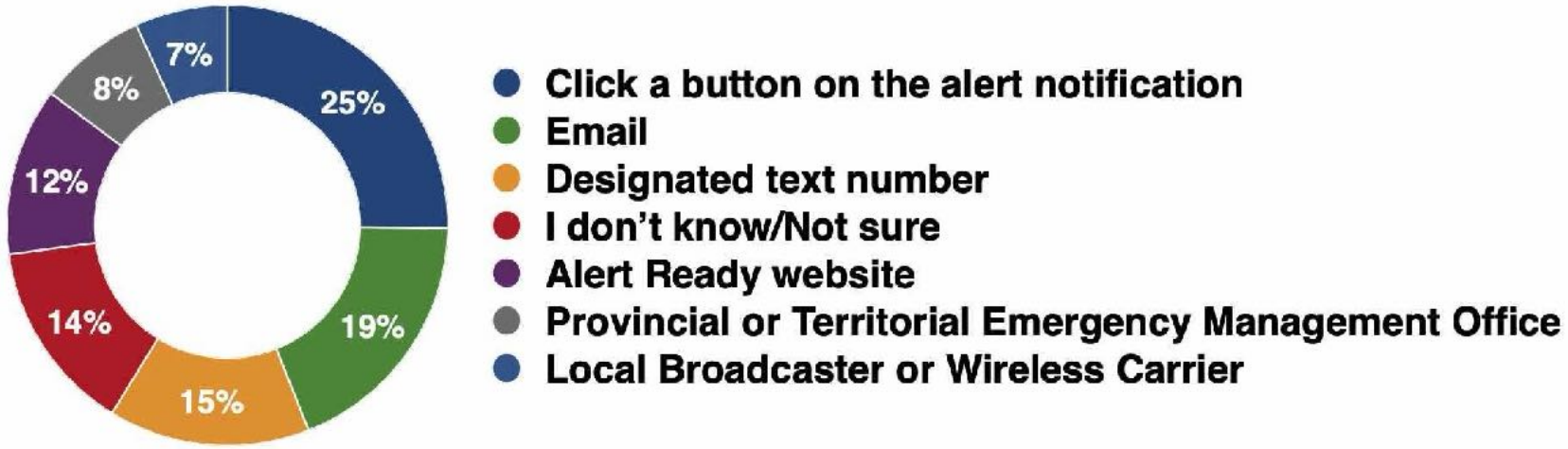
8 in 10 (77%) DHH respondents want to give feedback on a test public alert.





Submitting Feedback on Test Public Alerts

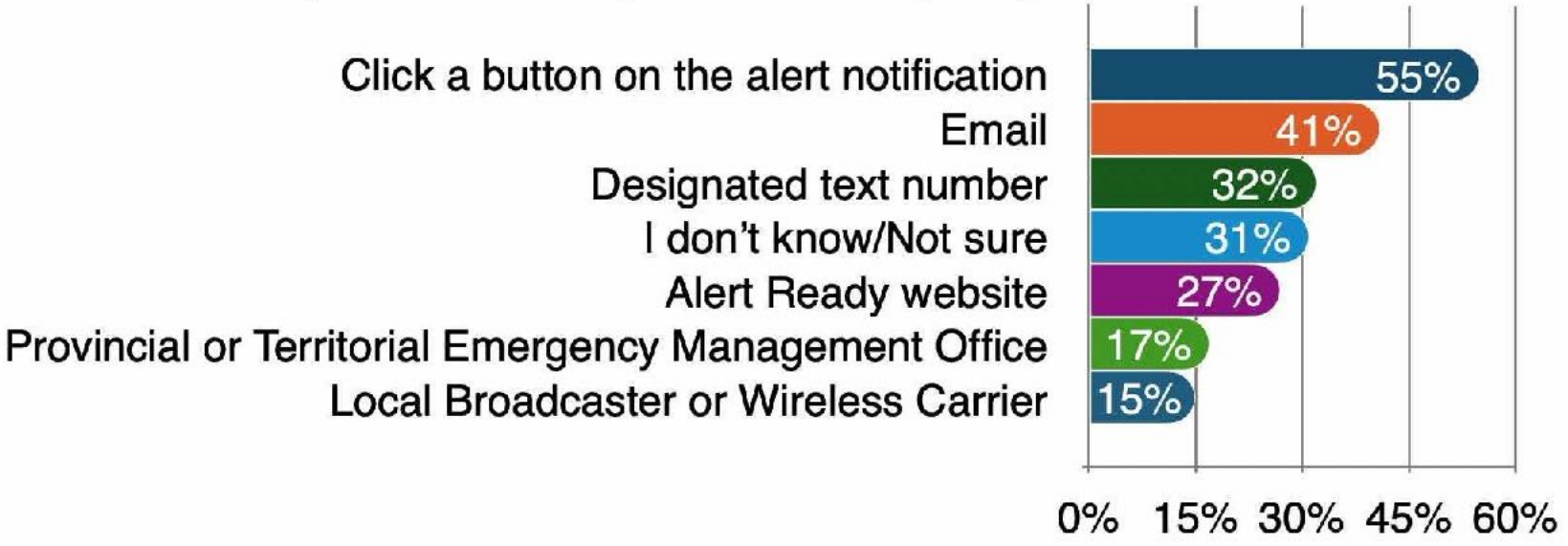
59% of responses from DHH respondents reported a preference for submitting feedback via **a button on the alert notification, email**, or **text message**.



1,266 responses from DHH respondents

Submitting Feedback on Test Public Alerts

DHH respondents reported a preference for submitting feedback via a **button on the alert notification, email**, or **text message**.



Submitting Feedback on Test Public Alerts

Top 3 ways DHH respondents would like to submit their feedback about public alerts they receive.

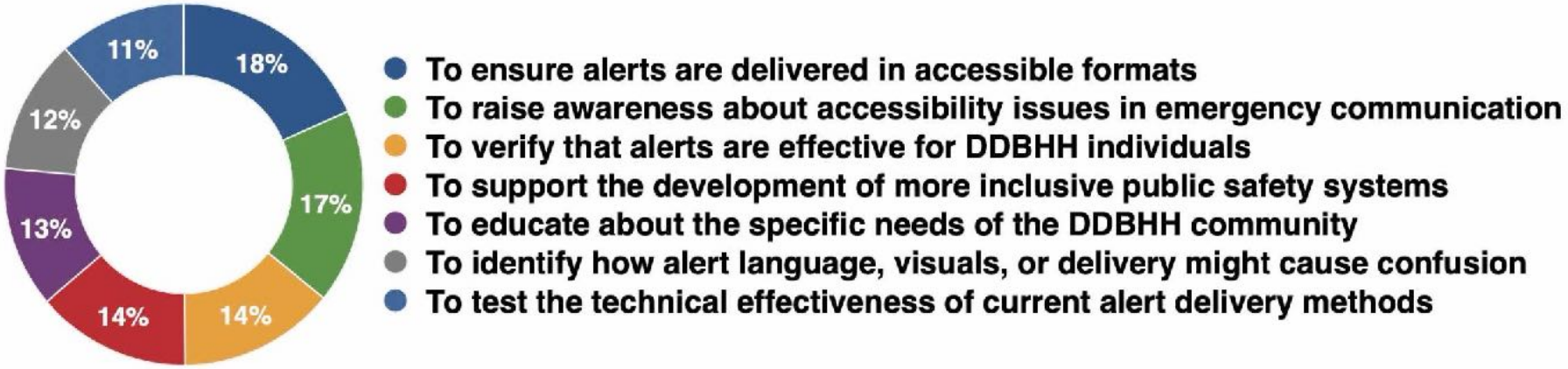
Button on alert notification

Email

Text Messaging

Rationale for Submitting Feedback

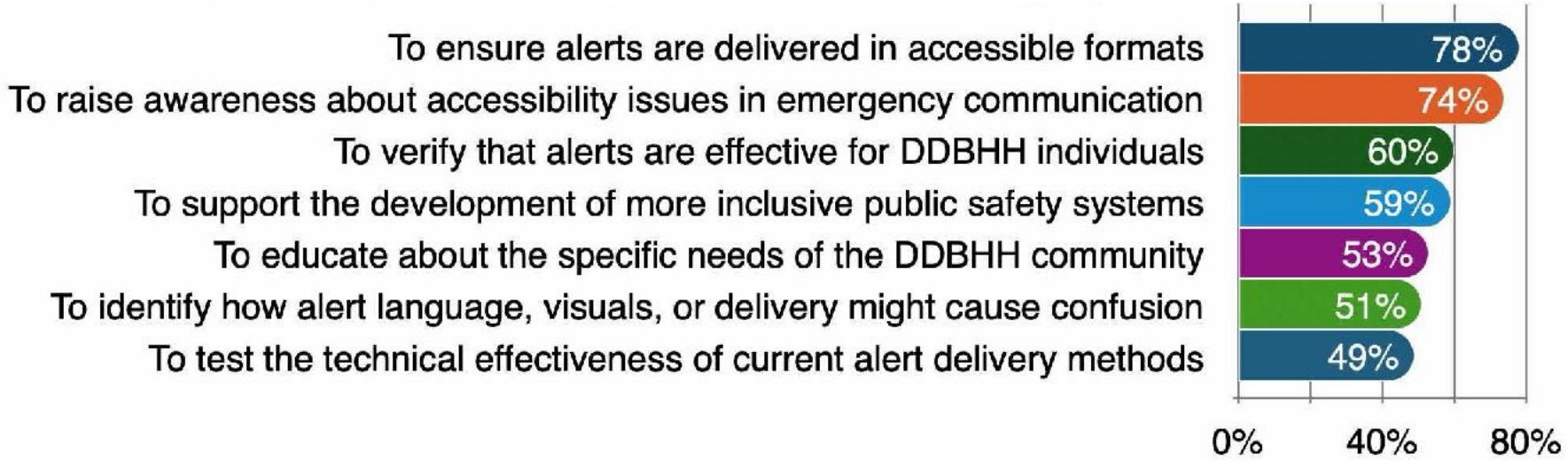
51% of responses from DHH respondents emphasized the importance of providing feedback on public alerts to ensure they are **accessible**, **effective**, and **raise awareness**.



2,432 responses from DHH respondents

Rationale for Submitting Feedback

DHH respondents emphasized the importance of providing feedback on public alerts to ensure they are **accessible**, **effective**, and **raise awareness**.



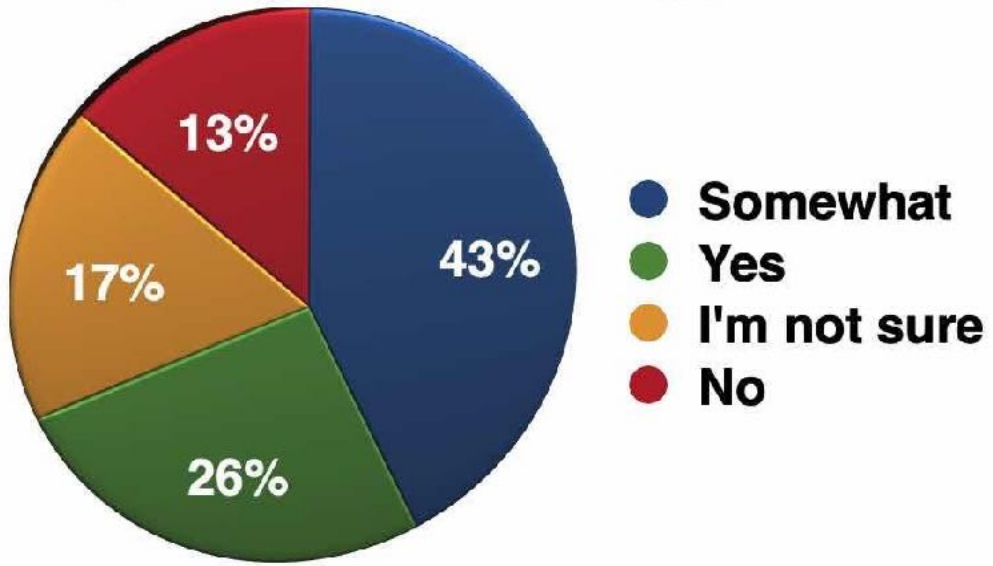
Rationale for Submitting Feedback

5 reasons why DHH respondents believe they should be able to give feedback on a test public alert

1. To ensure alerts are delivered in accessible formats
2. To raise awareness about accessibility issues in emergency communication
3. To verify that the alerts are effective for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals
4. To support the development of more inclusive public safety systems
5. To educate about the specific needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community

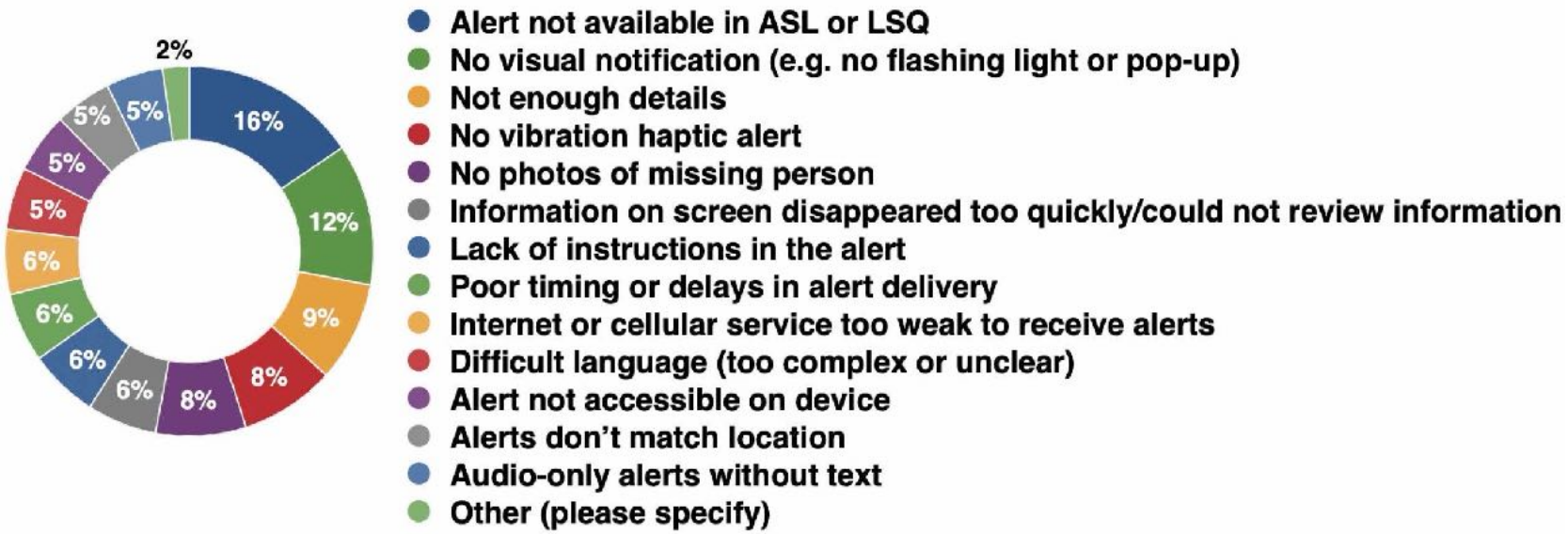
DHH Accessibility of Public Alerts

6 in 10 (56%) DHH respondents indicated that the current public alerting system is **not fully accessible**.



Barriers to DHH Accessibility

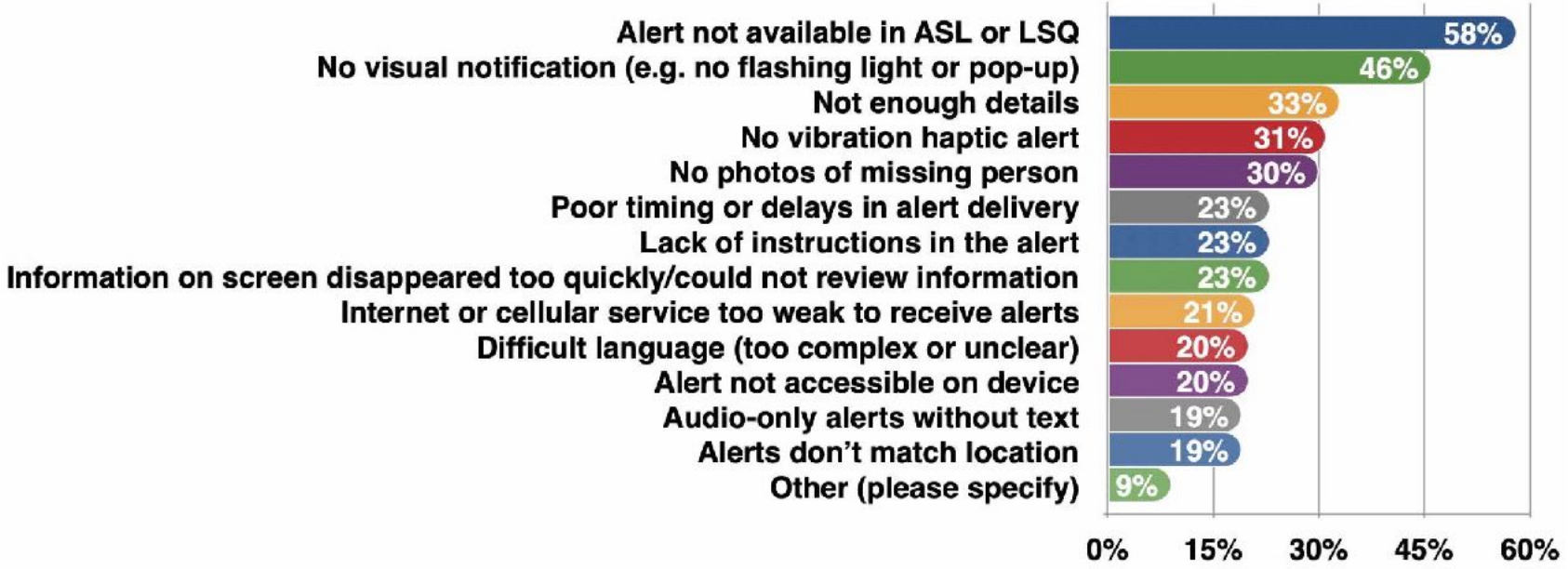
Responses from DHH respondents identified barriers to the public alerting system in three areas: **technical/delivery issues**, **accessibility features**, and **comprehension**.



3,772 responses from DHH respondents

Barriers to DHH Accessibility

DHH respondents identified **three major barriers** to the public alerting system: **alerts not available in ASL/LSQ**, **no visual alerts**, and **not enough details**.



Barriers to DHH Accessibility

5 major barriers DHH respondents face when receiving public alerts.

1. Alert unavailable in ASL or LSQ
2. No visual notifications
3. Not enough details
4. No vibration or haptic alert
5. No photos of the missing person

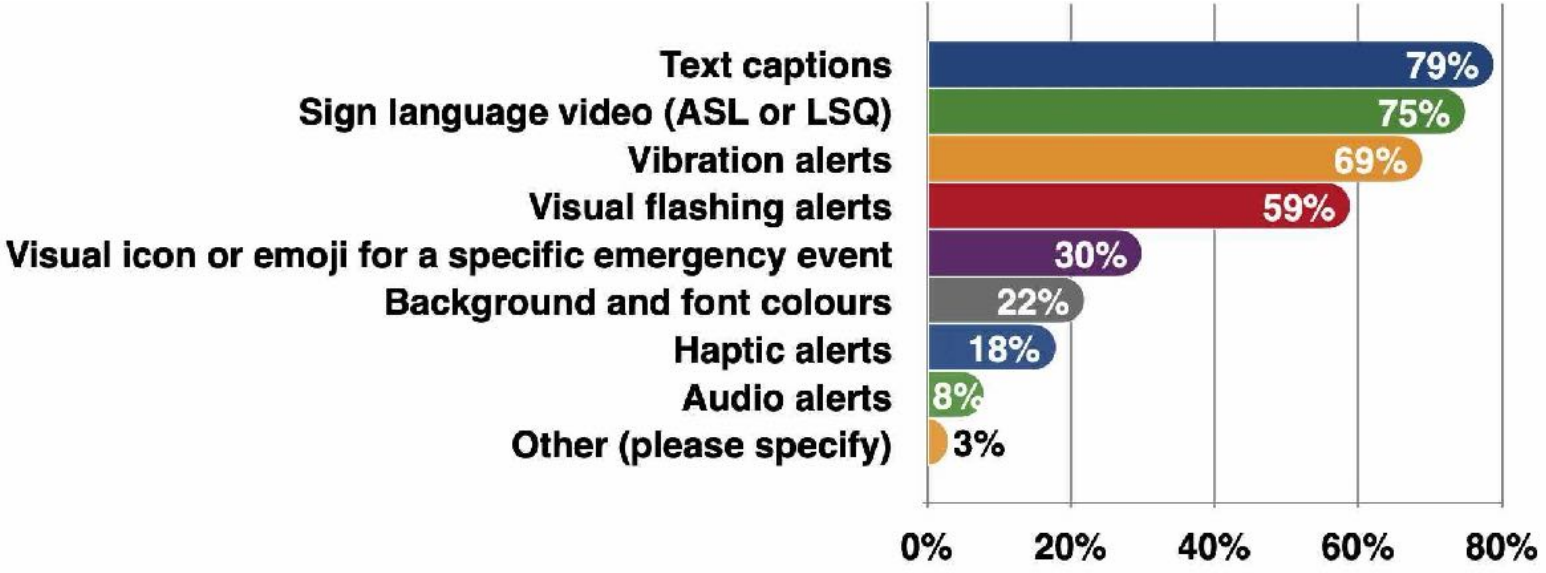
DHH Accessibility

62% of responses from DHH respondents reported that **text captions**, **videos in ASL/LSQ**, and **vibration alerts** ensure the accessibility of public alerts.

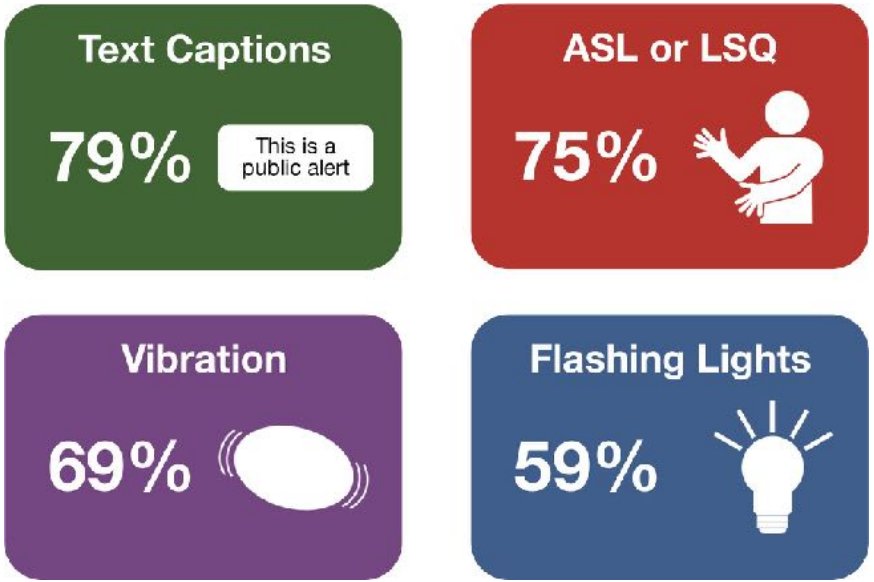
3,770 responses from DHH respondents

DHH Accessibility

DHH respondents reported that **text captions**, **videos in ASL/LSQ**, and **vibration alerts** ensure the accessibility of public alerts.

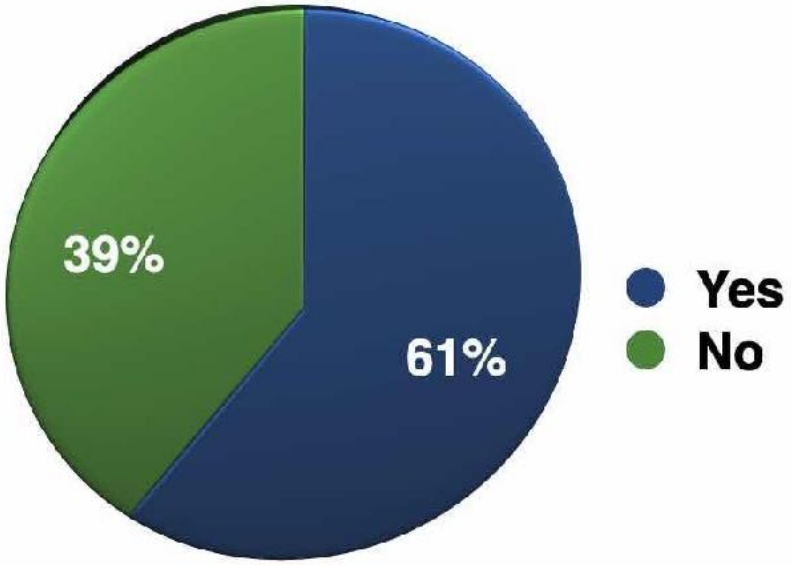


4 most accessible formats of public alerts for DHH respondents.



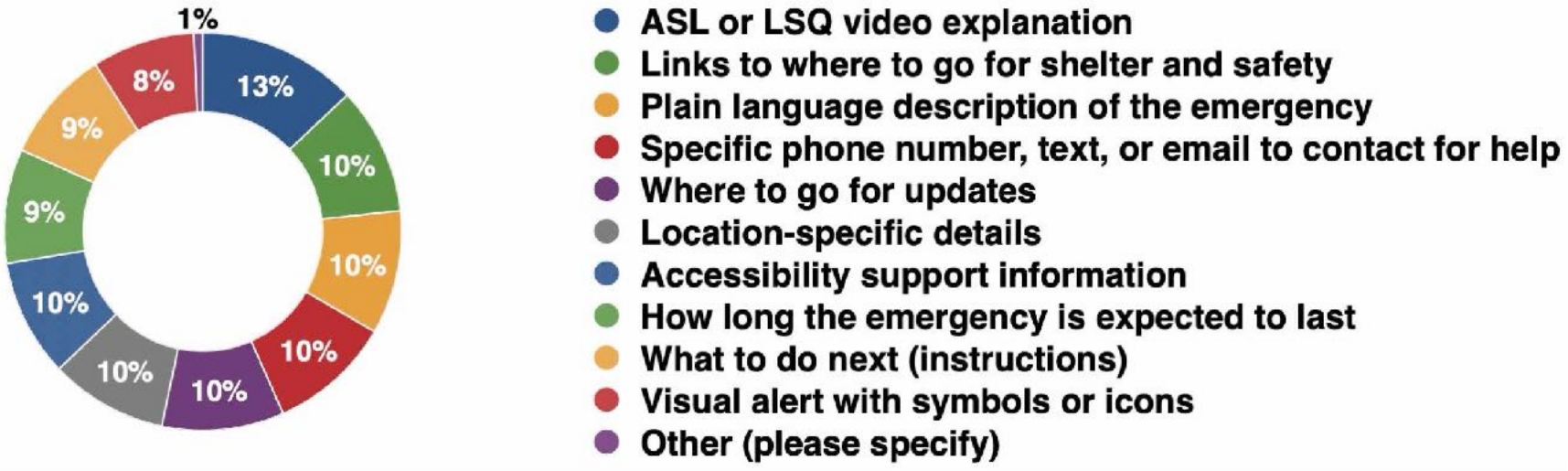
Content Satisfaction

4 in 10 (39%) DHH respondents are dissatisfied with the information provided in public alerts.



Alert Accessibility

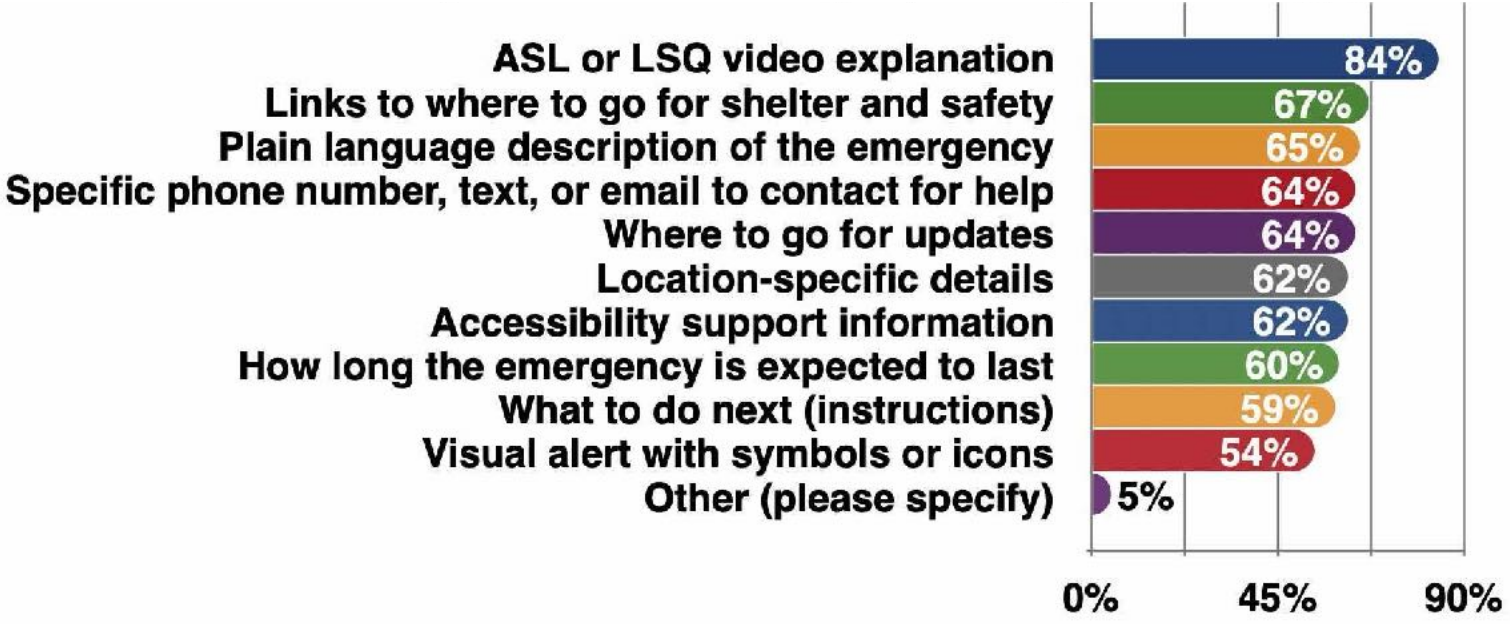
33% of responses from DHH respondents indicated that the inclusion of **ASL/LSQ videos**, **links to shelter and safety info**, and **plain-language content** enhances the clarity of public alerts.



2,594 responses from DHH respondents

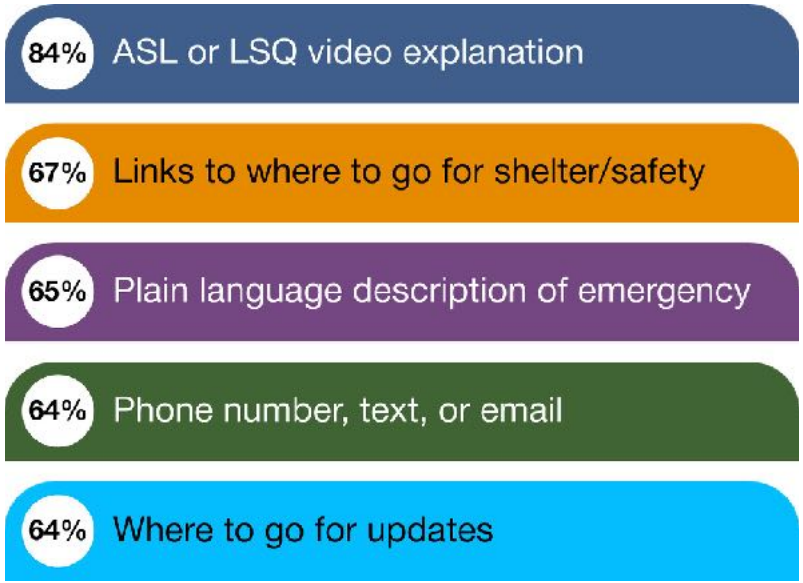
Alert Accessibility

DHH respondents indicated that that the inclusion of **ASL/LSQ videos**, **links to shelter and safety information**, and **plain-language content** enhances the clarity of public alerts.



Alert Accessibility

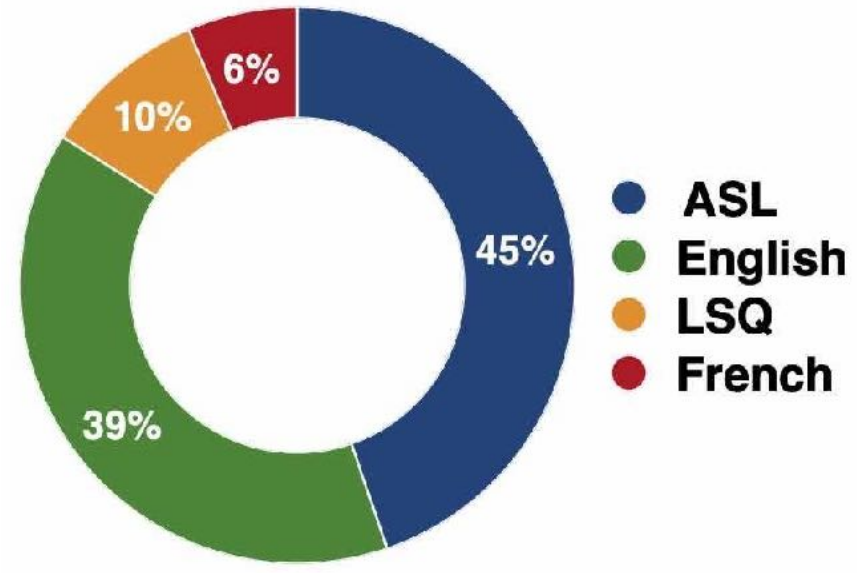
Information that DHH respondents want included in public alerts to make them **easy to understand**, **accessible**, and **actionable**.



Language Accessibility

Preferred Language(s)

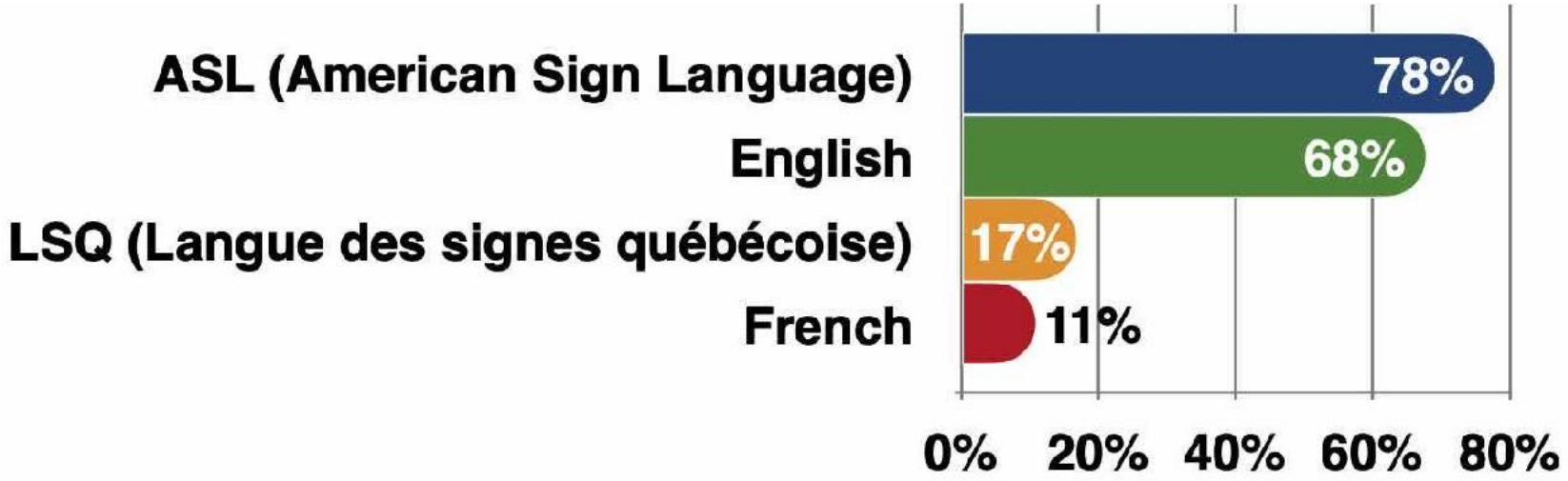
Responses from DHH respondents indicated that their **preferred languages** for receiving public alerts are **primarily signed languages (55%)**, **followed by written languages (45%)**.



1,795 responses from DHH respondents

Preferred Language(s)

DHH respondents indicated that their **preferred languages** for receiving public alerts are **primarily signed languages**, **followed by written languages**.



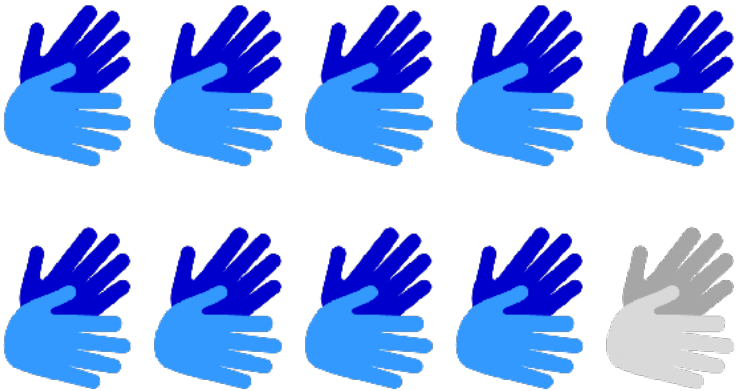
Preferred Language(s)

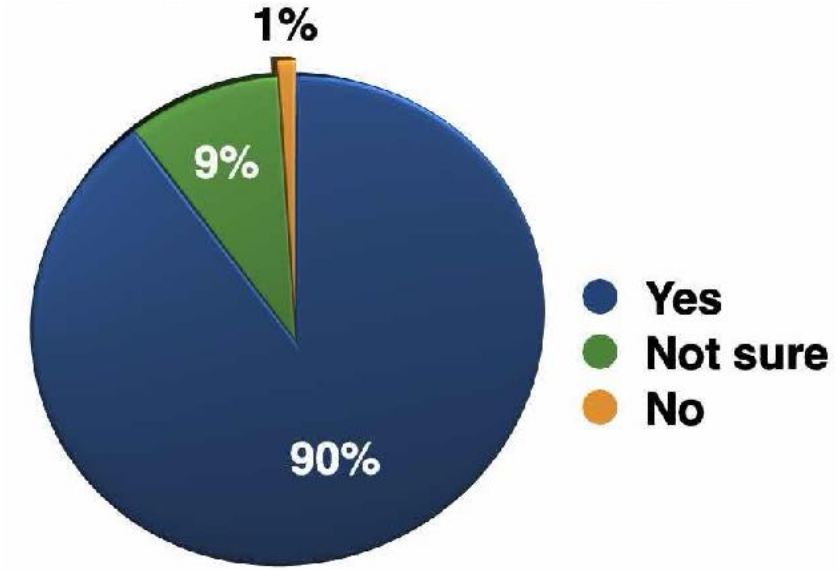
DHH respondents indicated that their **preferred languages** for receiving public alerts are **primarily signed languages**, **followed by written languages**.

- **78%** ASL
- **17%** LSQ

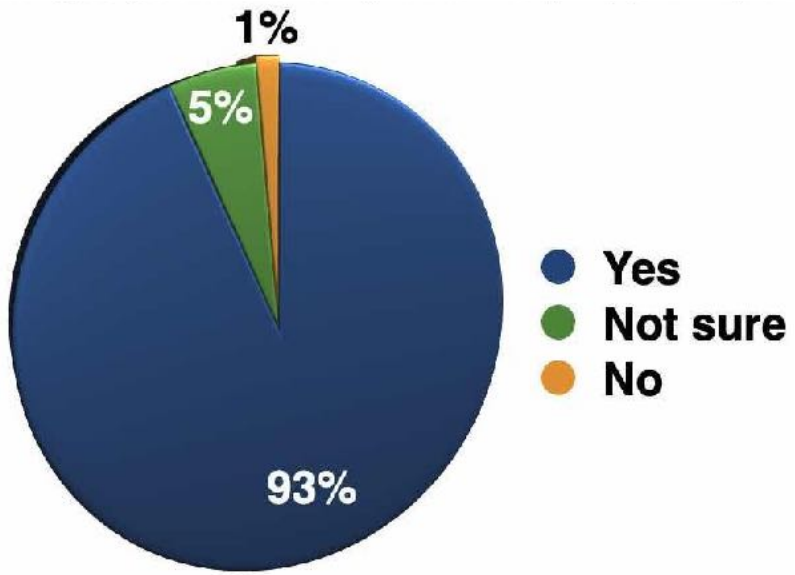
- **68%** English
- **11%** French

9 in 10 (90%) DHH respondents support a federal requirement to **include sign language** in all public alerts.





9 in 10 (93%) DHH respondents believe that **sign language** should be available in public alerts across **all platforms**.



Key Issues

Inaccessible Alert Formats

75. Alerts are not available in ASL or LSQ, and there are minimal visual alerts. Many DHH Canadians cannot fully understand or access alerts when they appear.

76. Current alerts are not designed with DHH communication needs in mind, limiting their effectiveness in emergencies.

Lack of Sign Language Inclusion

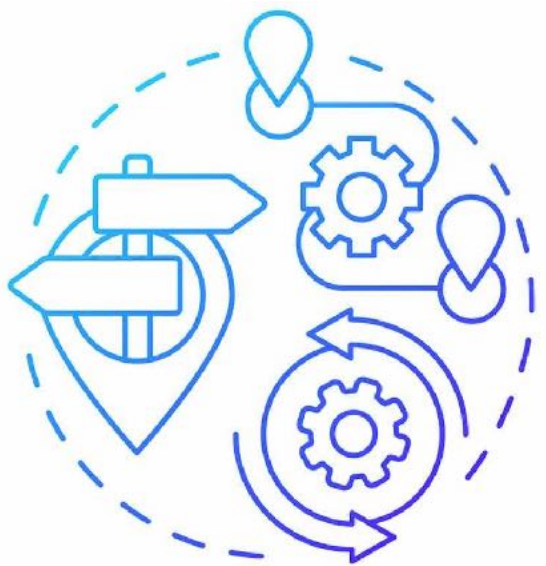
77. Public alerts in Canada are not available in ASL or LSQ, leaving many DHH Canadians without access to vital information in their primary language.

78. Without sign language integration, critical information during emergencies remains out of reach.

Delivery and Comprehension Barriers

79.DHH Canadians face inaccessible public alerts due to technical, delivery, and comprehension barriers.

80. Because past alerts cannot be reviewed, it is difficult to retain or understand information in real time. As a result, alerts are not easily delivered, understood, or revisited by DHH Canadians.



Key Issue #4

Dissatisfaction with Alert Content

81. Alert often lacks clarity, context, and accessible explanations.

82.DHH Canadians want ASL/LSQ video explanations, plain language descriptions, and links to shelter and safety to better understand and act on alerts.

Lack of Plan Awareness and Adoption

83. An alarming 38% of DHH respondents are unaware of the existence of wireless accessibility plans, while 23% are aware of them but have not adopted one.

84.In total, 61% of the respondents currently do not have a wireless accessibility plan.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Integrate Sign Language into Alerts

1. **Embed ASL and LSQ videos directly into all broadcast and digital alerts**
   a. Automatically display ASL and LSQ alongside written content
   b. Videos must be high-quality, clearly visible, and timed to appear simultaneously with alert text

2. **Include ASL/LSQ links in Wireless Public Alerts**
   a. A single-tap short link into an ASL/LSQ version hosted on an accessible platform
   b. Ensures DHH Canadians receive vital information without delay

1. **Standardize sign language integration across all alerting authorities**
   a. Federal, provincial, and municipal agencies to use consistent protocols for producing and distributing ASL/LSQ emergency messages

By integrating ASL and LSQ into public alerts, emergency communication becomes immediate, understandable, and actionable for DHH Canadians - closing a major accessibility gap.

Recommendation #2

Enhance Visual and Text-Based Alert Formats

4. **Use clear and high-contrast visual designs**
    a. Feature distinct colours for different alert levels (warning, advisory, test, etc.)
    b. Use universally recognizable icons for specific emergency event

5. **Plain language summaries**
    a. Be concise and direct that is easily understood by individuals with varying literacy levels
    b. Use bullet points rather than complex sentence structures

4. **Structure alerts for quick scanning**
    a. What is happening
    b. Where it's happening
    c. Who is affected
    d. What to do
    e. Where to get more information

Public alerts must be instantly recognizable, easy to interpret, and accessible to DHH Canadians

Recommendation #3

Enable Accessible Alert Review and Feedback

7. **Create an accessible alert archive**
    a. Stored in a central, easy-to-navigate platform

7. **Enable replay functionality on all platforms**
    a. Be able to pause, rewind, or slow down video alerts
    b. Allow full comprehension at individual's own pace

7. **Incorporate feedback mechanisms**
    a. Embed a clickable button on alert notification to submit feedback
    b. Include email address and text message number to submit feedback

Accessible review and replay features empower DHH Canadians to fully understand and act on emergency information, increasing safety during and after crises.

Recommendation #4

Mandate Promotion of Wireless Accessibility Plans

10. **Include or promote features that make Wireless Public Alerts accessible**
    a. Visual and/or vibration-based notifications for emergency alerts
    b. Text-based alternatives to audio alerts
    c. Device and network settings optimized for accessibility

11. **Key collaboration point between telecom providers and public safety authorities**
    a. Ensure that alerts are transmitted in accessible formats
    b. Users are aware of how to receive them in accessible formats
    c. Accessibility is integrated into public alert readiness

10. **Ensure DHH Canadians receive timely public alerts and maintain prioritized access, unthrottled access to video communication services, especially during emergencies**
    a. Enable DHH Canadians to communicate with first responders, family, and support networks without barriers and preventing any delay or blockages of essential communications

Conclusion

Conclusion

Accessibility barriers to public alerts continue to create significant challenges for DHH Canadians, often preventing them from receiving timely and usable emergency information.

While most respondents reported having both Wireless and Internet access, it is concerning that nearly two-thirds do not subscribe to a wireless accessibility plan — an option that could provide customized and more accessible alerting features.

Respondents also rely heavily on other platforms to receive public alerts, including television, social media, and email or text messaging, making it essential that alerts delivered through these channels are fully accessible.

Most respondents have received public alerts, primarily related to AMBER alerts, system testings, and weather events. However, two-thirds indicated that they would like the ability to review past public alerts, noting that alerts often disappear too quickly.

Although, although four-fifths of respondents reported receiving a test public alert, many were unable to provide feedback, limiting opportunities to ensure alerts are delivered in accessible formats, to raise awareness of accessibility issues, and to verify the system's effectiveness for DHH Canadians.

Therefore, it is essential that public alerts be accessible, effective, and designed to raise awareness among all DHH Canadians.

Conclusion - cont'd

More than half of respondents reported that the current public alerting system is not fully accessible. The main barriers fall into three areas: technical and delivery issues, accessibility features, and comprehension.

In particular, respondents highlighted the absence of ASL or LSQ in public alerts, the lack of visual alerts options, and insufficient information in the messages.

To reduce these barriers, public alerts should include text captions, vibration and flashing-lights notifications, and ASL and LSQ content.

Ensuring that alert information is adequate also requires ASL and LSQ video explanations, links to shelter and safety resources, and plain-language descriptions of the emergency.

Survey results indicate that DHH respondents prefer receiving public alerts in sign languages rather than in written languages. An overwhelming majority also support a federal requirement to include sign language in all public alerts and believe these accessible formats should be available across all platforms.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of making public alerts accessible, effective, and inclusive for DHH Canadians across all platforms and formats.

It is essential to ensure barrier-free access to information during emergency situations.

Access to public alerts is a **human right,** not a luxury.

Accessibility must be a forethought.

~ Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee ~

APPENDIX A, B & C
see separate document
link