

Earthquake Warnings Via Cell Phone - Japan's Mobile Safety

Cell phones may soon issue earthquake warnings. If you doubt that our lives will be intertwined with our phones, this may convince you. Japan's three largest cell carriers will cooperate to send alerts from the government's advance warning system to phones. The precious few seconds or minutes before a quake could save an untold number of lives.



The system, operated by the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), ties together an extensive network of earthquake monitors on a high-speed

network to provide data to a variety of users, including TV stations, manufacturers and cell phone operators. The system provides warnings by measuring the primary waves (P-waves) from a quake, which are weak and fast-moving, to automatically predict when the slower and much more destructive secondary waves (S-waves) will arrive at a given location and how strong they will be. The amount of warning varies and could be anything from a few seconds to up to a minute. People closer to the quake's epicenter get shorter warnings -- and in some cases might get none at all -- but researchers agree that the possibility of any warning is better than none. (digitalworldtokyo)

