

Not only EEW, but also "Disaster and Evacuation Information" to Cellular Phone

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Japan has recently experienced several large-scale earthquakes exceeding a seismic intensity of 6, including the 2004 Niigata Prefecture Chuetsu Earthquake and the 2007 Noto Peninsula Earthquake. These earthquakes were accompanied by significant damage that generated much interest in earthquake countermeasures. Against this background, the "Study Group on Official Operation of an Earthquake Early Warning System" was launched in 2005 by the Japan Meteorological Agency. Following a limited offering to local public bodies and research institutions from August 1, 2006, the provision of earthquake early warnings for the general public began on October 1, 2007.

Earthquake early warnings are not limited to broadcast media such as TV and radio. They are expected to be accessible to everyone in the nation, so they are also provided via communications media such as fixed-line telephones and cell phones. Cell phones, in particular, are the focus of much attention because they enable warnings to be received at any time day or night.

There are also expectations for the rapid provision of disaster and evacuation information to residents of a potentially affected area. This could include information about tsunamis, rivers overflowing their banks, and landslides together with directions to evacuation sites.

As part of its efforts to achieve a safe and secure society, DOCOMO developed the Early Warning "Area Mail" service to broadcast such emergency information by email and launched the service with its FOMA 905i series of handsets.