ATAK

IPAWS Alerts



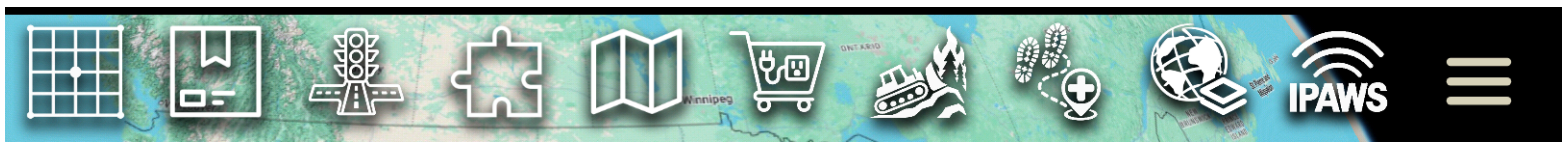
Plug-in Version: 0.6
ATAK 5.8.0
10 November 2026

Contents

Overview 3
The main screen 4
Settings 5
The zoom gate 6
    Zoomed out past the gate 7
Distance 8
Where 9
    A county is a touch, not a filing 10
Types and severity 11
Colors and the map key 12
The list 13
    An alert's details 14
The line at the top 15
Notifications 16
    What a notification looks like 17
On the map 18
    The Overlay Manager 19
This manual, and what it does not do 20

Overview

IPAWS Alerts puts public emergency alerts on the ATAK map, with the filter chosen on this device. An engine, a division or a strike team sets its own states, counties and alert types, on the phone, in the field, whether or not there is a server in the path.



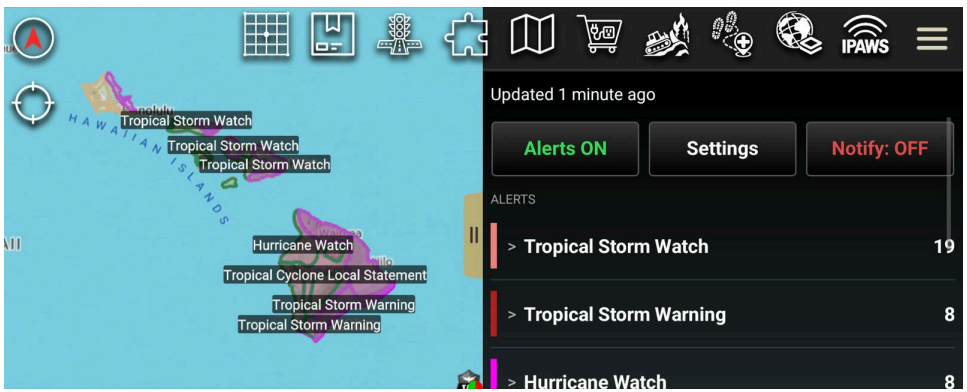
Open it from the ATAK toolbar, or from Tools if it is not on the bar.

Everything it draws is local to this device. Nothing is published, nothing reaches another phone. The alerts come from the National Weather Service: its own products - red flag warnings, floods, winter storms - plus the non-weather messages it relays, such as Evacuation Immediate and Civil Emergency Message.

The main screen



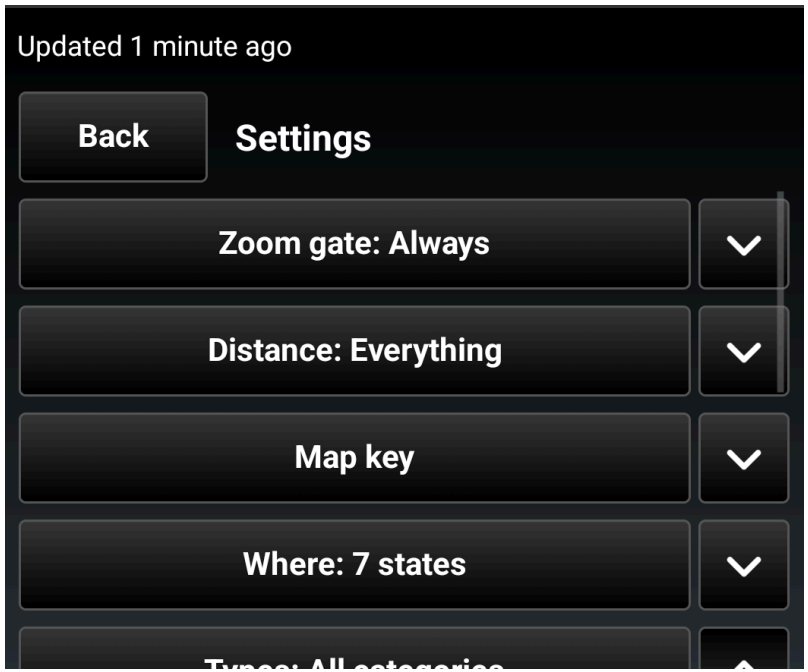
Alerts OFF: the list keeps running, the map is clear.



Alerts ON: the same alerts drawn on the map.

The main screen is three buttons and the alert list. **Alerts ON / OFF** switches the alerts on the map, **Settings** opens everything else, and **Notify ON / OFF** switches notifications. Both switches show what is: green ON, red OFF, and both start OFF on a new install. With the map off the top line says “map off”, so an empty map never reads as no weather.

Settings

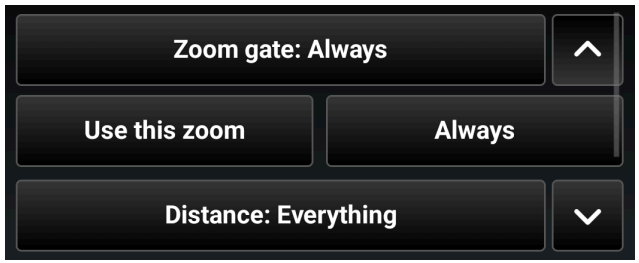


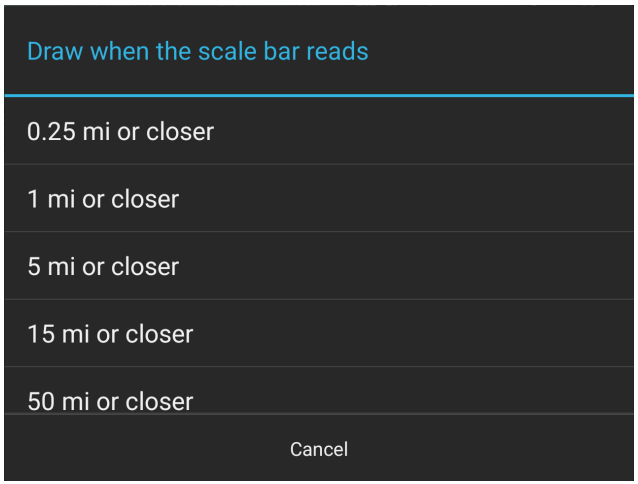
Settings replaces the list with a page of rows: zoom gate, distance, map key, where, types, severity, how often to check, and notifications. **Back** returns to the list.

Each row names a setting and says what it is set to - “Zoom gate: Always”, “Where: 7 states” - so the whole setup reads at a glance without opening anything.

Tap a row, or the arrow at its end, to open its controls. Each stays open or closed the way you left it.

The zoom gate





The **zoom gate** keeps the map clean when zoomed out. Alerts draw only while ATAK's scale bar reads the chosen distance or less.

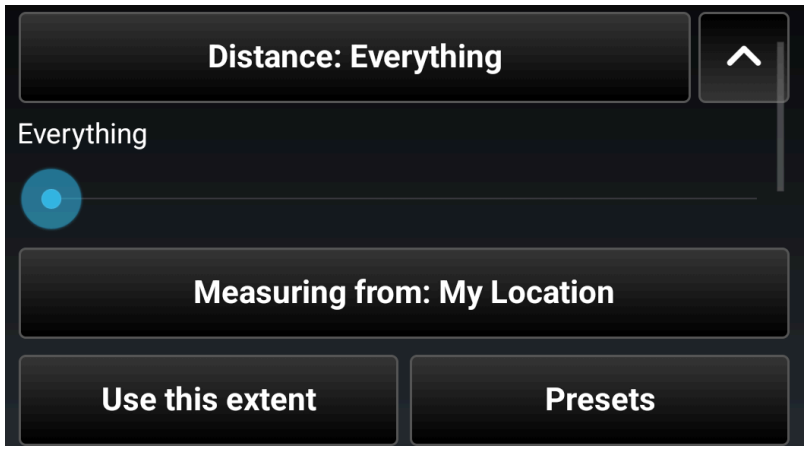
Use this zoom takes whatever the scale bar reads right now. The other button picks from a list: 0.25, 1, 5, 15 or 50 miles or closer, or Always, which is the default.

Zoomed out past the gate



With the gate at 5 miles and the scale bar reading 126, nothing draws, and the top line says “zoom in to see alerts on the map”. Zoom in and they come back.

Distance



Distance narrows the list and the map to what is near.

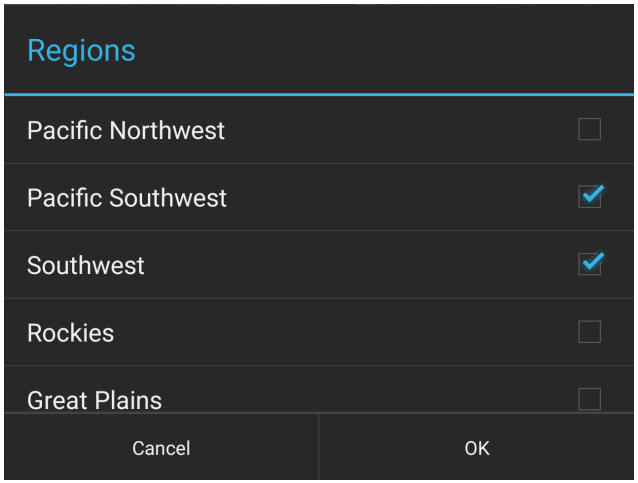
- The slider all the way left is **Everything** - no limit.
- Anywhere else it is **Within N miles**, 1 to 50.
- **Measuring from** switches between **My Location** and **Map Center**.
- **Use this extent** covers what is on the screen.
- **Presets**: Everything, What is in view, 2 to 50 miles.

An alert counts if any part of its area is within the distance. With no GPS fix, My Location measures from the map center and says so.

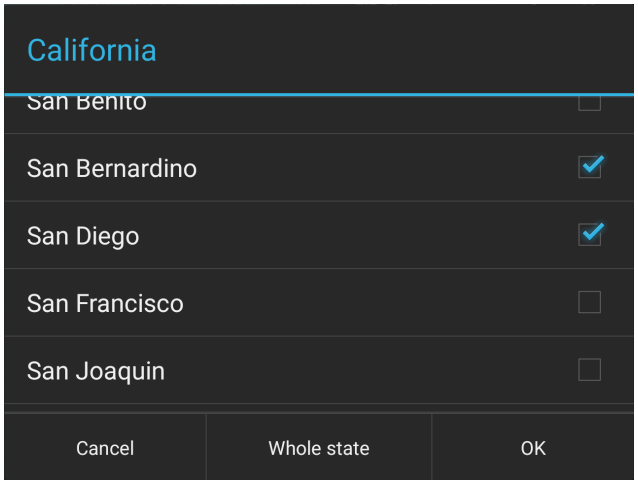
Where



Regions, states and counties.



Regions tick whole groups, offshore waters included.



Counties narrow a state. **Whole state** undoes it.

A brand new install picks the state the phone is in, as soon as it has a fix and a connection. It never moves a filter that has been set: drive across a state line and the filter stays put.

A county is a touch, not a filing

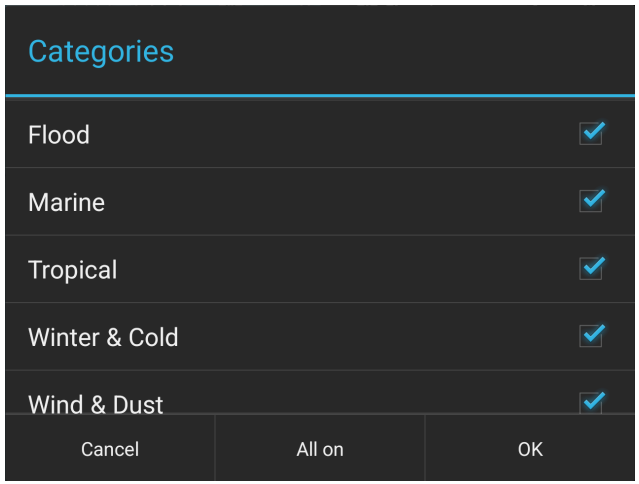
A state with no counties ticked means the whole state; with counties ticked, only those. Narrowing California does not switch Nevada off.

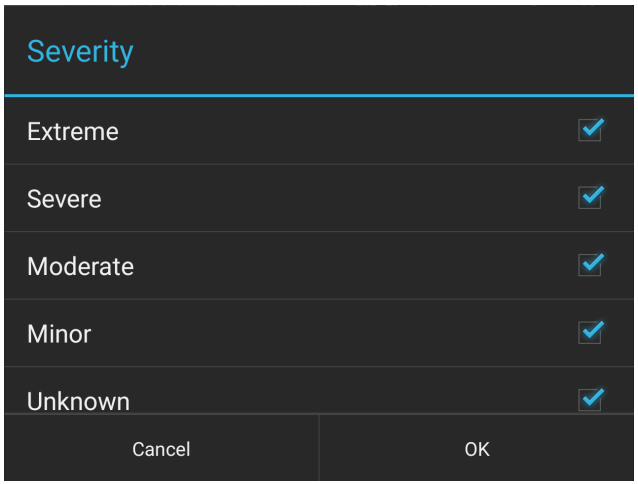
An alert shows if its area **reaches** a picked county, whether or not the Weather Service filed it under that county:

- A **marine** alert names no county at all. If it reaches the water off your county, you get it.
- A forecast zone that laps over a county line is filed however the Weather Service chose. If it reaches your ground, you get it.

Deselecting a state drops its counties with it, so a state added back later comes back whole.

Types and severity

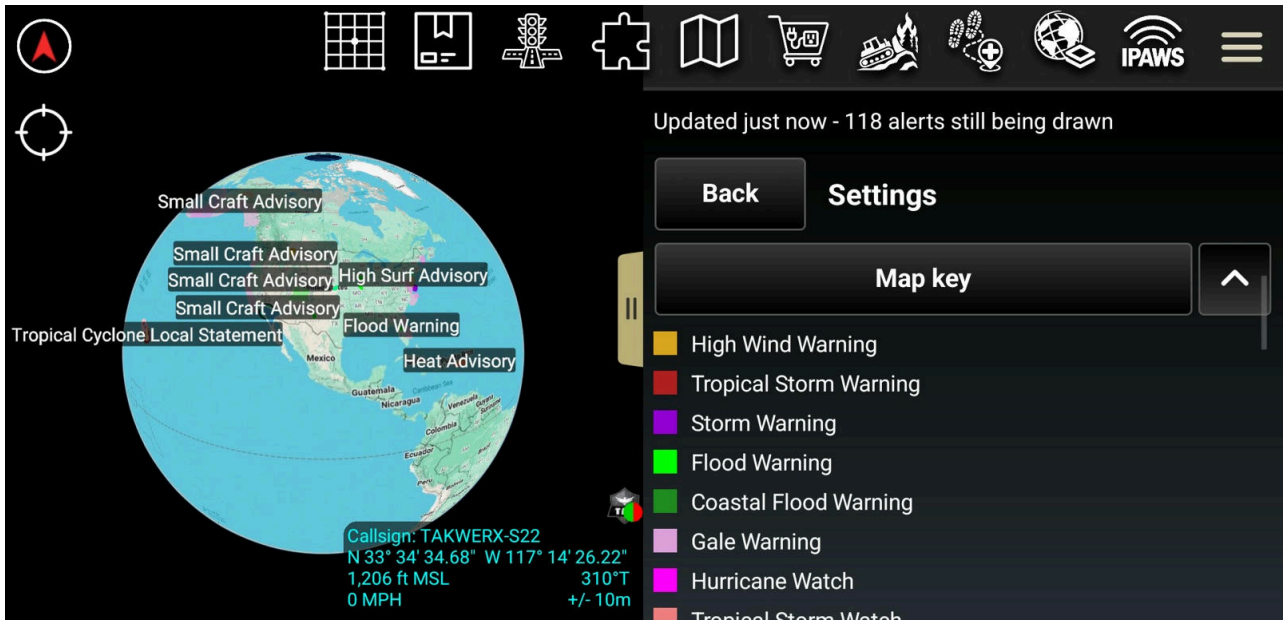




The 111 alert types are grouped into thirteen categories. Switch **Marine** off and its twenty types go with it; the second types button narrows a kept category to particular types. A type the Weather Service adds later is shown.

Severity sorts the list worst first and decides what notifies. It is not the color: every Watch is Severe while most Warnings are only Moderate.

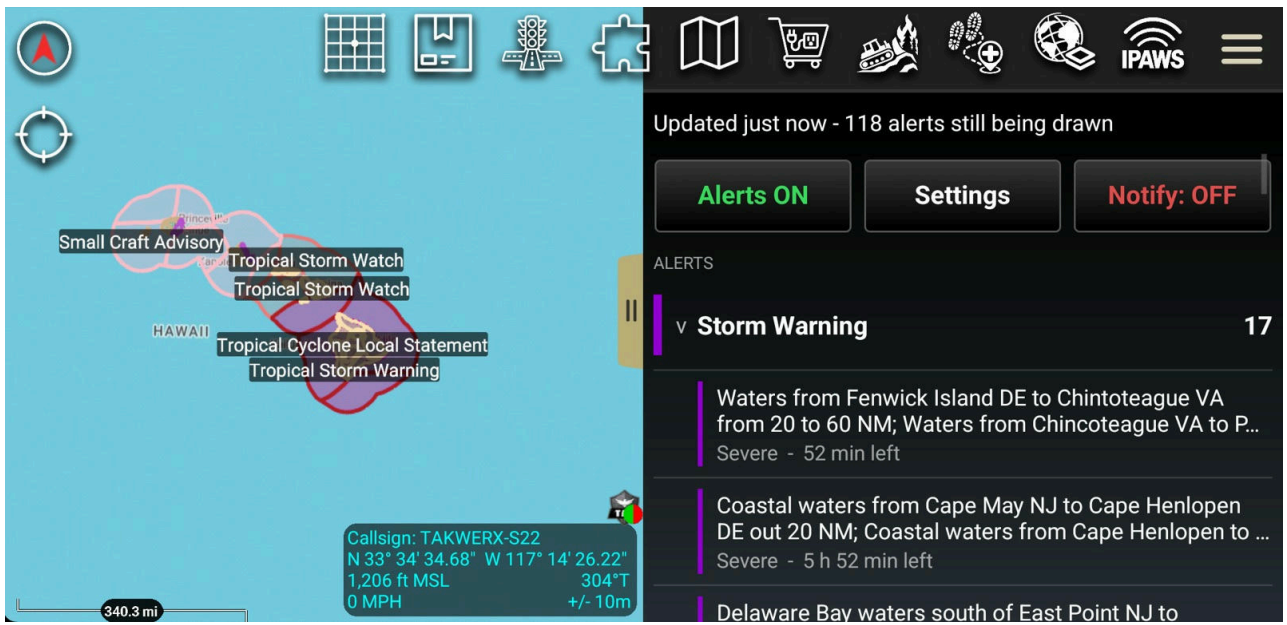
Colors and the map key



Each alert type is drawn in the National Weather Service's own color for it, the table every public weather map uses.

Map key lists the colors of the types on the map right now, and only those, so it changes with the filter and the weather. It is drawn from the same table as the map, so the two cannot disagree.

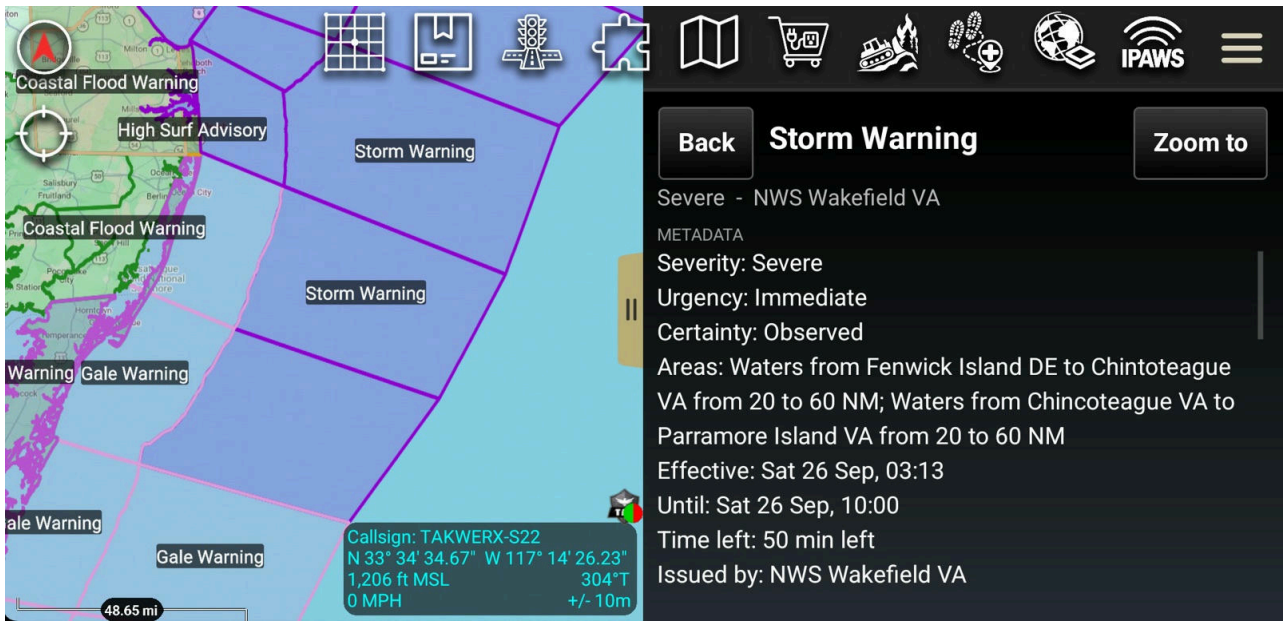
The list



Alerts are grouped by type, worst first: “Storm Warning 17” is one row, and tapping it opens the seventeen. A type with one alert opens it directly.

Each alert shows its areas, its severity and how long is left.

An alert's details



Tap an alert for the whole thing: severity, urgency, areas, times, and the issuing office's headline, what is happening and what to do.

Zoom to frames its area on the map, with the details still open beside it.

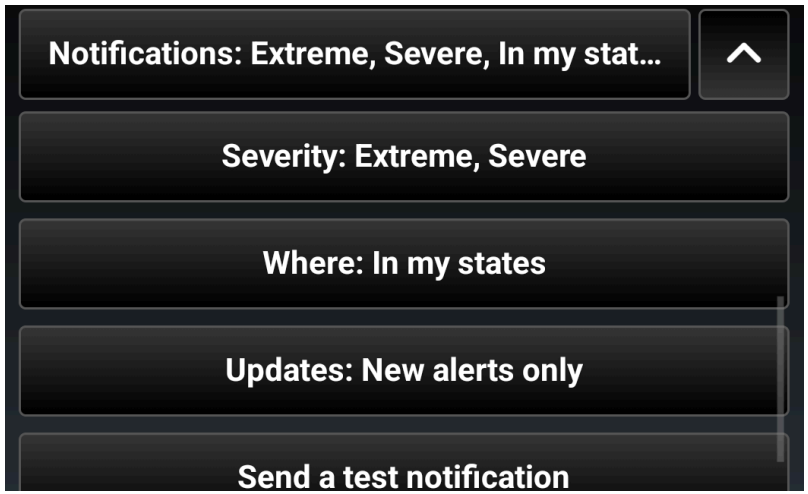
The line at the top

The top line of the pane says how old the picture is. It is worth reading: a map that has not been updated for twenty minutes looks exactly like one that has.

- "Updated 4 minutes ago" - the picture is current.
- "Last updated 12 minutes ago - timed out" - the network failed. The map keeps the last good set; it is never blanked because a check failed.
- "N alerts still being drawn" - areas are still arriving.
- "1 alert shown at the state's center" - its area could not be found, so it is a dot in the middle of its state or stretch of water.
- "map off", or "zoom in to see alerts on the map".
- "No states picked" - choose them in Settings, Where. On a first start it says "Finding the state you are in…" and keeps trying until it can.

Every N min sets how often it checks, one to thirty minutes, five by default. It keeps checking with the pane closed. **Check now** asks immediately.

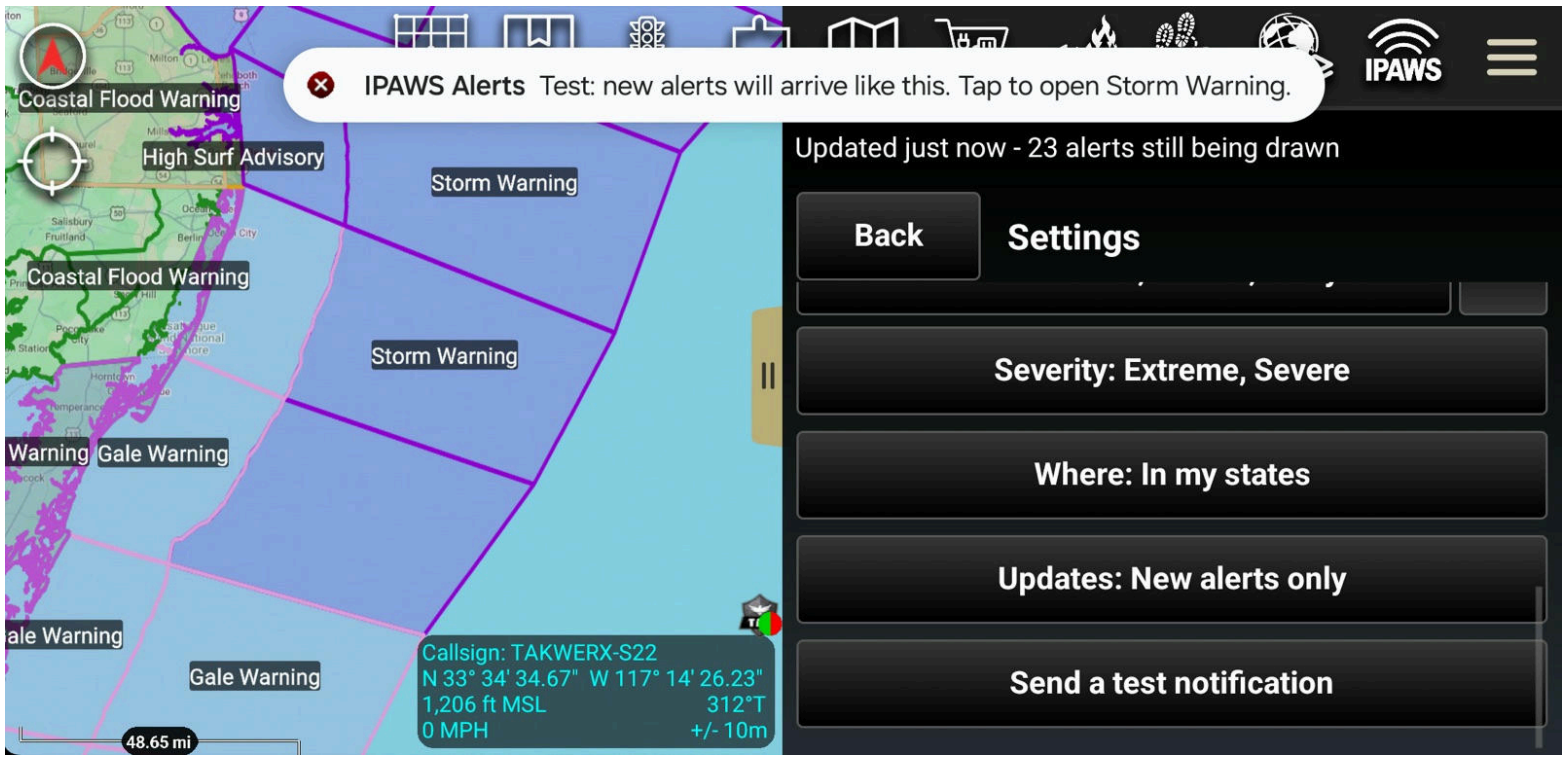
Notifications



Notify on the main screen switches notifications on. Their settings are the last row of **Settings**:

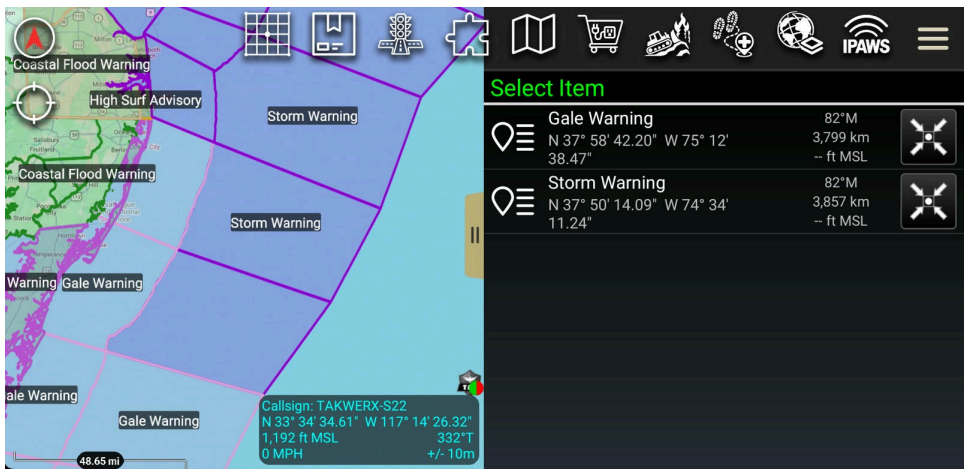
- **Severity**: Extreme and Severe to begin with.
- **Where**: **In my states**, **Within 2 to 50 miles of me**, or **Same as the map**.
- **Updates**: **New alerts only**, or **New and updated**.
- **Send a test notification**.

What a notification looks like



It pops up with a sound and names the worst of the new alerts. Tap it to open that alert. It never announces weather that was already there when a filter changed. Android lists it under ATAK as “IPAWS Alerts”, where its sound can be changed.

On the map

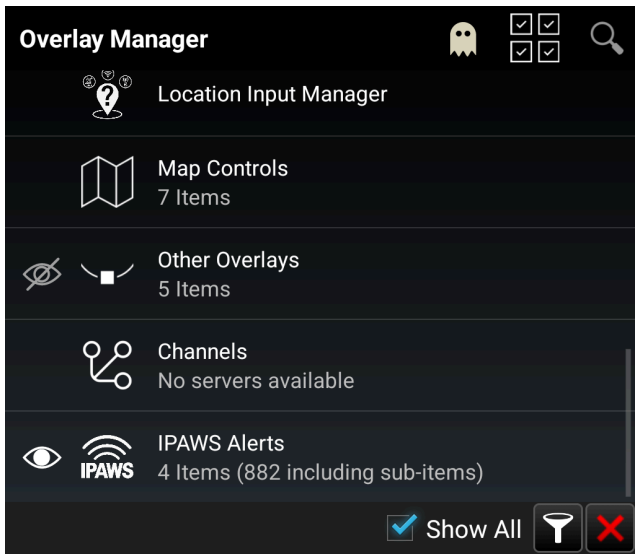


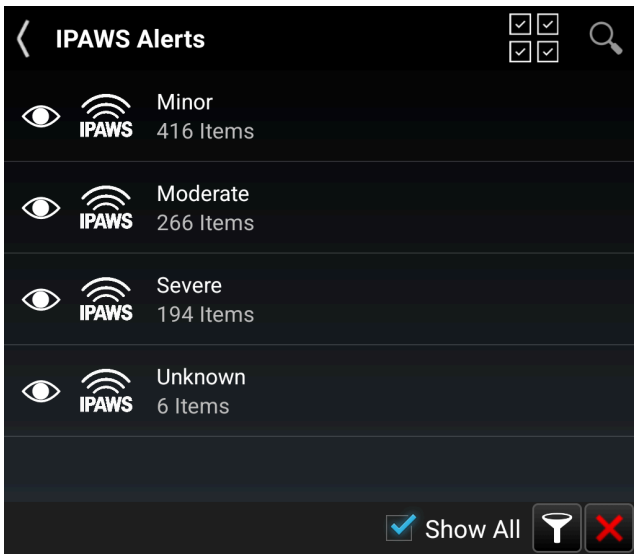
Tap an area and its details open in the pane, the same page the list opens.

Where areas overlap, ATAK asks which alert you meant, one line each.

Areas have a colored edge and a faint fill, because alerts overlap constantly and solid fills would hide the ground. Most alerts name forecast zones instead of carrying an area; those are fetched once and kept on the device.

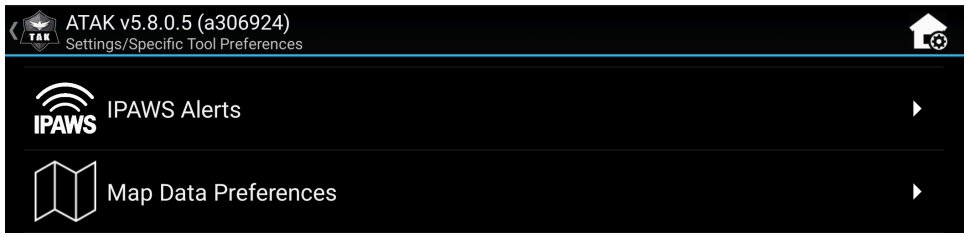
The Overlay Manager





The overlay is in ATAK's **Overlay Manager** as "IPAWS Alerts", with one entry per severity. The quieter half can be switched off there without opening the plugin.

This manual, and what it does not do





This manual opens from ATAK's Settings, under Tool Preferences, Specific Tool Preferences, IPAWS Alerts.

IPAWS Alerts publishes nothing: no path puts an alert on another phone.

It is not the FEMA aggregator. IPAWS-OPEN also carries state and local originators and needs an agreement with FEMA. This shows everything the Weather Service issues or relays.