

Public Alerts

318.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for alerting the public to important information and soliciting public aid when appropriate.

318.2 POLICY

Public alerts may be employed using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), SM Alert, social media, local radio, television and press organizations and other groups to notify the public of incidents, or enlist the aid of the public, when the exchange of information may enhance the safety of the community. Various types of alerts may be available based upon each situation and the alert system's individual criteria.

When appropriate, the investigating officer will contact the California Highway Patrol - Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC) at (916) 843-4199 to initiate any public alert listed in this policy.

318.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

318.3.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Santa Monica Police Department should notify their supervisor, Watch Commander, or Criminal Investigations Division Supervisor as soon as practicable upon learning of a situation where public notification, a warning, or enlisting the help of the media and public could assist in locating a missing person, apprehending a dangerous person, or gathering information.

318.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor apprised of the need for a public alert is responsible to make the appropriate notifications based upon the circumstances of each situation. The supervisor shall promptly notify the Chief of Police, the appropriate Division Commander and the Press Information Officer when any public alert is generated.

The supervisor in charge of the investigation to which the alert relates is responsible for the following:

- (a) Updating alerts
- (b) Canceling alerts
- (c) Ensuring all appropriate reports are completed
- (d) Preparing an after-action evaluation of the investigation to be forwarded to the Division Commander

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318.4 AMBER ALERTS

The AMBER Alert™ Program is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, transportation agencies and the wireless industry, to activate urgent bulletins in child abduction cases.

318.4.1 CRITERIA FOR AMBER ALERT

The following conditions must be met before activating an AMBER Alert (Government Code § 8594(a)):

- (a) A child has been abducted or taken by anyone, including but not limited to a custodial parent or guardian.
- (b) The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or has a proven mental or physical disability.
- (c) The victim is in imminent danger of serious injury or death.
- (d) There is information available that, if provided to the public, could assist in the child's safe recovery.

318.4.2 PROCEDURE FOR AMBER ALERT

The supervisor in charge will ensure the following:

- (a) An initial press release is prepared that includes all available information that might aid in locating the child:
 - 1. The child's identity, age and description
 - 2. Photograph if available
 - 3. The suspect's identity, age and description, if known
 - 4. Pertinent vehicle description
 - 5. Detail regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, if known
 - 6. Name and telephone number of the Press Information Officer or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
 - 7. A telephone number for the public to call with leads or information
- (b) The local California Highway Patrol communications center should be contacted to initiate a multi-regional or statewide EAS broadcast, following any policies and procedures developed by CHP (Government Code § 8594)
- (c) The press release information is forwarded to the Sheriff's Department Emergency Communications Bureau so that general broadcasts can be made to local law enforcement agencies.
- (d) Information regarding the missing person should be entered into the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS).
- (e) Information regarding the missing person should be entered into the California Department of Justice Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS)/National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

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(f) The following resources should be considered as circumstances dictate:

1. The local FBI office
2. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

318.5 BLUE ALERTS

Blue Alerts may be issued when a sworn officer is killed, injured or assaulted and the suspect may pose a threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.

318.5.1 CRITERIA FOR BLUE ALERTS

All of the following conditions must be met before activating a Blue Alert (Government Code § 8594.5):

- (a) A law enforcement officer has been killed, suffered serious bodily injury or has been assaulted with a deadly weapon, and the suspect has fled the scene of the offense.
- (b) The investigating law enforcement agency has determined that the suspect poses an imminent threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.
- (c) A detailed description of the suspect's vehicle or license plate is available for broadcast.
- (d) Public dissemination of available information may help avert further harm or accelerate apprehension of the suspect.

318.5.2 PROCEDURE FOR BLUE ALERT

The supervisor in charge should ensure the following:

- (a) An initial press release is prepared that includes all available information that might aid in locating the suspect:
 1. The license number and/or any other available description or photograph of the vehicle
 2. Photograph, description and/or identification of the suspect
 3. The suspect's identity, age and description, if known
 4. Detail regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, if known
 5. Name and telephone number of the Press Information Officer or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
 6. A telephone number for the public to call with leads or information
- (b) The local California Highway Patrol communications center is contacted to initiate a multi-regional or statewide EAS broadcast.
- (c) The information in the press release is forwarded to the Sheriff's Department Emergency Communications Bureau so that general broadcasts can be made to local law enforcement agencies.
- (d) The following resources should be considered as circumstances dictate:

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1. Entry into the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS)
2. The FBI local office

318.6 SILVER ALERTS

Silver Alerts® is an emergency notification system for people who are 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired and have been reported missing (Government Code § 8594.10).

318.6.1 CRITERIA FOR SILVER ALERTS

All of the following conditions must be met before activating a Silver Alert (Government Code § 8594.10):

- (a) The missing person is 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired.
- (b) The Department has utilized all available local resources.
- (c) The investigating officer or supervisor has determined that the person is missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
- (d) The investigating officer or supervisor believes that the person is in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions, that the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril.
- (e) There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

318.6.2 PROCEDURE FOR SILVER ALERT

Requests for a Silver Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Government Code § 8594.10).

318.7 MUTUAL AID

The experiences of other law enforcement jurisdictions that have implemented similar plans indicate a public alert will generate a high volume of telephone calls to the handling agency.

The Sheriff's Department emergency communications facilities and staff can be made available in the event of a high call volume.

If the Watch Commander or Criminal Investigations Division Supervisor elects to use the services of the Sheriff's Department, the following will apply:

- (a) Notify the Sheriff's Department Watch Commander of the incident and the request for assistance. The Watch Commander will provide a telephone number for the public to call.
- (b) In the press release, direct the public to the telephone number provided by the Sheriff's Department Watch Commander.

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- (c) The Press Information Officer will continue to handle all press releases and media inquiries. Any press inquiries received by the Sheriff's Department will be referred back to this Department.

The Santa Monica Police Department shall assign a minimum of two detectives/officers to respond to the Sheriff's Department emergency communications facility to screen and relay information and any clues received from incoming calls. As circumstances dictate, more staff resources from the handling law enforcement agency may be necessary to assist the staff at the emergency communications facility.

318.8 ADDITIONAL ALERTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCIES

Additional public safety emergency alerts may be authorized that utilize wireless emergency alert system (WEA) and emergency alert system (EAS) equipment for alerting and warning the public to protect lives and save property (Government Code § 8593.7).

318.8.1 CRITERIA

Public safety emergency alerts may be issued to alert or warn the public about events including but not limited to:

- (a) Evacuation orders (including evacuation routes, shelter information, key information).
- (b) Shelter-in-place guidance due to severe weather.
- (c) Terrorist threats.
- (d) HazMat incidents.

318.8.2 PROCEDURE

Public safety emergency alerts should be activated by following the guidelines issued by the Office of Emergency Services (Government Code § 8593.7).

318.9 FEATHER ALERT

A Feather Alert may be issued when an Indigenous person is reported missing. The determination that criteria has been met for the alert shall be made within 24 hours following the initial report being made to the Department (Government Code § 8594.13).

318.9.1 CRITERIA FOR FEATHER ALERT

The Department may request that a Feather Alert be activated if it is determined that the alert would be an effective tool in the investigation of missing and murdered Indigenous persons, including young women or girls. The following factors shall be considered to make that determination (Government Code § 8594.13):

- (a) The missing person is an Indigenous person.
- (b) The Department has utilized local and tribal resources.
- (c) The investigating officer has determined the person is missing.
- (d) The investigating officer or supervisor believes that the person is in danger and missing under circumstances that indicate any of the following:

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1. The missing person's physical safety may be endangered.
 2. The missing person may be subject to trafficking.
 3. The missing person suffers from a mental or physical disability, or substance use disorder.
- (e) There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

318.9.2 PROCEDURE FOR FEATHER ALERT

Requests for a Feather Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Government Code § 8594.13).

318.10 ENDANGERED MISSING ADVISORY

An Endangered Missing Advisory may be requested when a person is reported missing who is developmentally disabled, or cognitively impaired, or has been abducted, or is unable to otherwise care for themselves, placing their physical safety at risk (Government Code § 8594.11).

318.10.1 CRITERIA FOR ENDANGERED MISSING ADVISORY

All of the following conditions must be met before activating an Endangered Missing Advisory (Government Code § 8594.11):

- (a) The missing person is developmentally disabled, cognitively impaired, has been abducted or is otherwise unable to care for themselves, placing their physical safety at risk.
- (b) The Department has utilized all available local resources.
- (c) The investigating officer has determined the person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
- (d) The investigating officer or supervisor believes that the person is in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions, that the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril.
- (e) There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

318.10.2 PROCEDURE FOR ENDANGERED MISSING ADVISORIES

Requests for an endangered missing advisory shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Government Code § 8594.11).

318.11 EBONY ALERT

An Ebony Alert may be requested when it is determined the alert would be an effective tool in the investigation of missing Black youth, including a young woman or girl (Government Code § 8594.14).

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318.11.1 CRITERIA FOR EBONY ALERT

The investigating officer may consider the following factors to make the determination that an Ebony Alert would be an effective tool (Government Code § 8594.14):

- (a) The missing person is between the ages of 12 and 25 years old, inclusive.
- (b) The missing person is missing under circumstances that indicate their physical safety is endangered or they have been subject to trafficking.
- (c) The missing person suffers from a mental or physical disability.
- (d) Determination that the person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
- (e) Belief that the person is in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions, that the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril.
- (f) The Department has utilized all available local resources.
- (g) There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

318.11.2 PROCEDURE FOR EBONY ALERT

Requests for an Ebony Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Government Code § 8594.14).

318.12 SM ALERTS

SMAlerts is a mass notification system used by the City of Santa Monica to ensure Santa Monica residents, businesses, and visitors are informed about public safety incidents, natural-and human induced emergencies, utility emergencies and similar incidents in and within close proximity to the City of Santa Monica.

All pertinent information to maximize the full protection of persons within the incident area should be shared, as necessary, to ensure the public and staff are informed of the appropriate actions they should take to protect themselves and their families.

318.12.1 CRITERIA FOR SM ALERTS

The following are approved message types which can be launched by the SMAlerts system:

- Evacuation orders
- Large fires with unmitigated impacts to the community
- Police incidents with unmitigated threats to public safety
- Locations of points of distribution (for food, water, medicine, etc.)
- Location of Family Reunification Centers, Shelters, and Assistance Centers
- Shelter in place guidance

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- Natural disasters which are imminent or in-progress
- Severe weather alerts
- Severe traffic road closure alerts
- Public safety lockdowns
- Regional or City curfews
- Incidents where a Local Emergency has been proclaimed

318.12.2 PROCEDURE FOR SM ALERT

- (a) Public Safety Field Supervisor determines the incident will pose imminent threats to public safety or a severe burden on the surrounding area.
- (b) Incident Commander, Watch Commander, Battalion Chief, or Public Works Administrator approves the need for an alert, confirms the area of interest, determines the intended audience, and confirms duration of the SMAAlerts and exact messaging.
- (c) Request for an SMAAlerts is sent to the Public Safety Communications Division within the Office of Emergency management (OEM) for development and dissemination of notification to the public.
- (d) Intended audience receives alert and takes action to mitigate exposure to incident once received.

318.12.3 DEACTIVATION

It is important to notify the public when the advisory has concluded. For all incidents except Street Closures or Vehicle Accidents/Traffic Collisions where a time estimate is provided in the original message, an "ALL CLEAR" message should be sent when the incident has concluded.

318.13 LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency, as defined in Government Code § 7299.7, the Santa Monica Police Department shall provide information to the public relating to the emergency in all languages jointly spoken by the local population as provided in Government Code § 7299.7.