

CALIFORNIA

# AMBER ALERT

America's Missing:  
Broadcast Emergency Response  
Manual



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## Local Plan

(Insert Local Plan)

*If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Into his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.*

- Emily Dickinson

# Introduction

## California's AMBER Alert

Time is the enemy following a child abduction, and law enforcement's response must be immediate and focused. The geography of California offers many advantages to a child abductor, including the opportunity to quickly transport the victim across county, state, or international borders, or otherwise escape to areas where detection can be difficult. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, most children who were abducted and later murdered were killed within the first three hours of their abduction. In light of these facts, it is essential to child safety that a coordinated response take place within those precious hours immediately after an abduction occurs.



America's **Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Alert**, or **AMBER Alert**, is a statewide innovative program that partners California's law enforcement community, media broadcasting agencies and the public in locating abducted children. The goal of AMBER Alert is to provide the public with immediate and up-to-date information about a child abduction via widespread media broadcasts and to solicit help from the public in the safe and swift return of the child. AMBER Alert is a key component of the California Child Safety Amber Network (CCSAN), a comprehensive child abduction response program administered by the California Highway Patrol (CHP).



One of the most important aspects of AMBER Alert is the partnerships formed between local law enforcement officials and media broadcasters, who work together to establish regional emergency response plans specific to each community's needs.



## Background

The State's AMBER Alert is modeled after the *AMBER Plan*, which was developed in 1996 after nine-year old Amber Hagerman was abducted near her home in Arlington, Texas, and later found murdered. Communities throughout the nation have since adopted modified versions of the original AMBER Plan with great success. To date, these plans have been instrumental in the successful recovery of at least 20 children nationwide.

The concept of AMBER Alert was first introduced as a pilot program in California on a regional basis. This program, named the Child Abduction Regional Emergency (CARE) Alert, was implemented in 1999 in Orange County and in 2001 in the Sacramento area, encompassing several counties. In 2002, Assembly Bill 415 (Government Code section 8594) mandated that AMBER Alert Plans be implemented statewide and include specific notification protocols for all communities.



## Overview

Under the AMBER Alert concept, law enforcement agencies employ the assistance of local radio and television stations to interrupt normal programming and request public assistance in locating children who have just been abducted. Emergency bulletins are relayed from law enforcement agencies to the media through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS). The EAS is a federal system used to alert the public of severe weather conditions and civil emergencies. The EDIS is a service provided by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) that allows government agencies to widely distribute newswire-style bulletins, as well as images and audio files.



## How does an AMBER Alert activation work?

When a law enforcement agency receives a report of a child abduction, it first confirms that the case meets specific criteria for an AMBER Alert activation. The agency then initiates either a regional, multi-regional or statewide EAS alert. For a multi-regional or statewide alert, the agency contacts the CHP's Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC), which will transmit a bulletin-type message to the appropriate local primary (LP-1) radio stations. The LP-1 stations relay the message to other media outlets within the designated regions. When accepted by media outlets, the message pre-empts local programming and is preceded and concluded with distinctive tones. For a more localized, regional alert, the law enforcement agency may send the message directly to its designated LP-1 station, which is pre-assigned by the Local Emergency Communications Committee (LECC), or contact ENTAC for assistance in coordinating this process.



While the law only requires activation of the EAS in child abduction cases meeting the AMBER Alert criteria, law enforcement agencies should also utilize EDIS and other available emergency notification systems to help disseminate urgent information to the public. To use EDIS, the investigating agency transmits a Be-On-the-Look-Out (BOLO) Administrative Message to all California law enforcement agencies via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS), using a specified format. This message is automatically relayed through EDIS to media outlets via text pager, e-mail, and other text forwarding systems. The media decides if, and in what priority, the message should be broadcast. The public is also advised to call the investigating agency with any helpful information.

As soon as photos or sketches are available, the investigating agency creates a poster on the Internet by uploading the images and entering pertinent data, using a template on the OES EDIS Web site. As soon as the poster is created, California law enforcement agencies and the media are notified via CLETS and EDIS, respectively. The poster may be downloaded as needed.

It is important to remember that AMBER Alert is effective only if activated when appropriate. If AMBER Alert is misused or employed in cases that do not meet the specified criteria, its credibility and integrity can be diminished.



## Purpose of This Manual

This Manual provides law enforcement and the media with the framework needed to develop and implement a successful regional AMBER Alert Plan and to supplement and strengthen existing plans. It provides useful information that includes:

- Roles and responsibilities of law enforcement, the media, and support agencies.
- When and how to activate an AMBER Alert.
- Contact information on resource agencies, including the California Highway Patrol, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and California Department of Justice.
- Convenient *AMBER Alert Activation Guide* for use by law enforcement personnel.
- References and resource material to aid in the recovery of abducted children.
- Copies of sample local plans.



# Roles and Responsibilities



## California Highway Patrol

The California Highway Patrol (CHP), Emergency Notification and Technical Alert Center (ENTAC) is responsible for providing statewide coordination of the California Child Safety Amber Network (CCSAN), which includes AMBER Alert.

The ENTAC has a critical role in AMBER Alerts. In conjunction with initiating law enforcement agencies, the ENTAC coordinates all multi-regional and statewide activations of EAS and is available to assist agencies with EAS activation on a more localized, regional basis, if necessary. Additionally, the ENTAC serves critical support functions in a wide variety of areas, including the Changeable

Message Signs (CMS) system on California's highways, EDIS bulletins, poster/flyer development and distribution, administration of child abduction prevention programs, and other emergency response activities. To request assistance, agencies should call ENTAC at (916) 657-8287. ENTAC is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



With the Emergency Alert System (EAS) being the focal point of AMBER Alert activations, it is important that local law enforcement agencies have a clear understanding of the value and potential of this resource in child recovery efforts.



## Emergency Alert System

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a federal communications system designed to inform the public in the event of a civil emergency. EAS messages, when accepted by participating radio and television stations, pre-empt local programming and are preceded and concluded with distinctive alert tones. The EAS can be activated on either a regional or statewide basis. For purposes of EAS administration, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) currently has divided California into 22 areas based on media markets. Each of these areas has a Local Emergency Communications Committee (LECC), which prepares plans for the use of the EAS and distributes EAS equipment to media outlets authorized to relay EAS messages. Local agencies only have the ability to send an EAS message to a pre-designated local primary radio station (LP-1) within their own FCC area. Although other local radio and television stations are required to monitor EAS messages transmitted by the LP-1, they are not required to re-broadcast the message. The development of regional/local plans will help solidify communication and institute agreements as to when broadcasts can be expected.

It is important to note that when activating an EAS Alert from a government EAS encoder and station, and depending on the Event Code used, the originator is “taking control” of radio and television broadcast air at that time and, in essence, is operating as a broadcaster. Agencies should be familiar with basic broadcast script procedures before attempting to originate an EAS alert using government-owned EAS encoders. Local broadcasters, in accordance with the Local EAS Plan, are ready to assist agencies with activating the EAS.

In child abduction cases, activation of the EAS at the local LP-1 covers only the local broadcasting area. To activate the EAS on a multi-regional or statewide basis, the local law enforcement agency must contact the CHP's ENTAC, which has installed EAS equipment in all of its 24 Communications Centers.

**Note:** To ascertain local LECC procedures and receive contact information on media agencies authorized to relay local EAS messages, all law enforcement agencies are encouraged to contact their LECC local emergency manager.



## Governor's Office of Emergency Services

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) oversees the statewide operations of the Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS), which effectively augments the EAS as an emergency public notification system in AMBER Alerts.

### Emergency Digital Information Service

The Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS) enables government agencies to electronically disseminate urgent text information, images and audio files to law enforcement and media outlets statewide. EDIS messages originate from various sources such as the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS), National Weather Service, the U.S. Geological Survey and major utility companies. EDIS performs several important functions in AMBER Alerts:

- EDIS enables CLETS messages regarding child abductions to be programmatically forwarded to law enforcement and media outlets statewide. The messages must contain specific wording in the header for computerized processing through the OES message switching system. (See instructions in Section 2 of this Manual).



When sending CLETS messages to EDIS in relation to an AMBER Alert, one of two EDIS bulletin types should be used:

**EDIS FLASH** — Immediate life-safety warnings only. ***This type is to be used for actual AMBER Alert broadcasts.***

**EDIS TEST** — To verify readiness of EDIS systems. Each agency should issue no more than two test bulletins per month. If more extensive testing is required, this should be first cleared with the OES EDIS Project Office at (800) 241-2921.

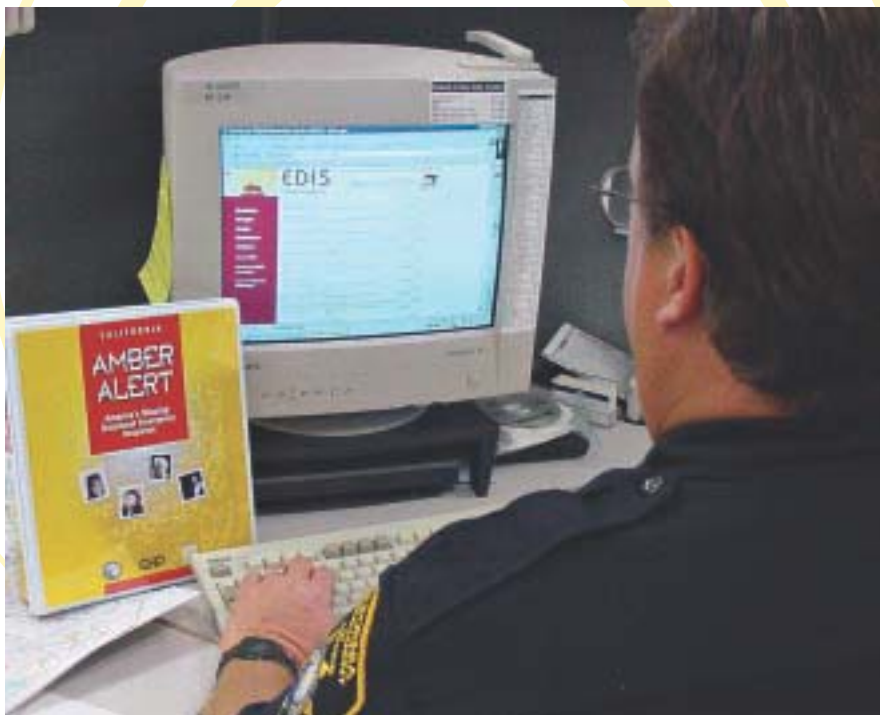
EDIS text messages are distributed through the following means:

- **Digital radio ("packet") broadcasts** in metropolitan areas (including Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, and Sacramento)
- **Direct satellite broadcast** to key newsrooms and county Emergency Operations Centers statewide
- **E-mail** (direct from OES for priority agencies and media, via nonprofit and commercial forwarding services for other agencies, media and the public)
- **Pager and wireless services** via the State's wireless portal service and commercial providers
- **Internet "XML" feed** (experimental) using the "Common Alerting Protocol"
- **On demand from the EDIS Web Site**

**Note:** EDIS should not be used in place of regular CLETS broadcast messages to law enforcement.

- EDIS includes a web site that allows law enforcement to quickly create and store child abduction posters on the Internet. This web site provides rapid dissemination of information and quality images to the media and the public.
- EDIS automatically notifies law enforcement agencies via CLETS when a poster has been created. Media agencies are also notified via EDIS message relay systems.

The OES does not monitor, edit or modify information submitted for posting to the EDIS Web site. Sole responsibility for all content lies with the originating agency. **All information submitted to EDIS is distributed directly to the media and the public and is also available on the EDIS Web Site.**





## Local Law Enforcement Agencies

Local law enforcement agencies are responsible for developing comprehensive AMBER Alert Plans that detail the response procedures and protocols specific to their jurisdictions. Following are key elements that should be addressed in developing and maintaining an effective local AMBER Alert Plan:

### **1. Establishing Emergency Management Relationships and Protocols**

Assembly Bill 415 (Government Code section 8594) requires law enforcement agencies to activate the EAS to facilitate urgent media broadcasts when warranted in child abduction cases. To ensure proper activation of the EAS, law enforcement agencies must first establish written policies, procedures, and protocols in conjunction with designated media representatives. As the first step in this process, each agency should contact its LECC Chairman to identify the assigned local primary radio station (LP-1). Agreements must be established with the LP-1 regarding the broadcasting and relaying of EAS messages originated by the agency.

Since an emergency alert plan is a complex and unique partnership between law enforcement and local broadcasters, it is vital that a strong working team be created. Law enforcement agencies should meet with representatives from the local media markets to discuss their respective roles and reach agreements on expectations and response. Many agencies choose to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize such plans.

Radio and television participation is voluntary and provided as a public service. Therefore, it is essential that law enforcement maintain good communications with local media and include them as a vital part of any local/regional AMBER Alert Plan to better ensure the plan is successful.



## 2. Establishing an EDIS Account

Before using the EDIS Web Site to create a child abduction poster, agencies must establish an EDIS user account. Requests for a user account must be submitted on agency letterhead to the EDIS Project Office at:

State of California  
Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
EDIS Program  
P.O. Box 419047  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047

Each request should include the following information:

- Agency name
- Contact name
- Contact telephone number
- Contact e-mail address
- Contact fax number
- Contact 24-hour telephone number
- A brief description of the agency's law enforcement jurisdiction
- The following paragraph:

*"The applicant agrees that it will be solely responsible for any information posted using its EDIS account, for appropriate use of the system, and for protection of the security of its account information including user name and password. Applicant will change its password on a regular basis using the provided on-line tool."*

Once the information has been verified, the requesting agency will receive an EDIS user ID and password, along with operational instructions.

## 3. AMBER Alert Criteria

After receiving a report of a child abduction, agencies must conduct a preliminary investigation and determine if the AMBER Alert activation criteria, as specified in Government Code 8594, have been met. ***All of the following conditions must apply:***

- ✓ **It has been confirmed that an abduction has occurred.**
- ✓ **The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or of proven mental or physical disability.**
- ✓ **There is reason to believe the victim is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death.**
- ✓ **There is information available that, if disseminated to the general public, could assist in the safe recovery of the victim.**

For purposes of an AMBER Alert, child abduction is defined as an incident in which a child is reported to be involuntarily missing from the person(s) having care-taking responsibilities for the

child. Absent an eyewitness to the abduction, agencies should have reliable evidence that the child's disappearance was not voluntary.

AMBER Alert should **not be** used for cases involving runaways, missing children in which there is no evidence of foul play or custody disputes that are not reasonably believed to endanger the life or physical health of a child.

#### **Cases not meeting AMBER Alert criteria**

EAS should be activated only in those child abduction cases meeting the mandatory AMBER Alert criteria. In cases that do not meet these criteria, agencies should continue to exercise discretion in determining which of the many other tools available would be the most appropriate for transmitting information and photos to other officers, the media and the public.

Agencies can still notify the media of such cases by using other standard news procedures, such as press releases or phone contact, or by transmitting an EDIS bulletin via CLETS, using a priority level lower than FLASH, such as URGENT or NEWS. (For more information on these priority levels, visit the EDIS Web Site at [www.edis.ca.gov](http://www.edis.ca.gov).)

#### **4. Establishing A Call Center**

It is likely that the broadcast of an AMBER Alert will immediately generate a high volume of calls from the public. Therefore, any telephone number given out by law enforcement should be adequately staffed and able to handle a high volume of calls simultaneously.

#### **5. Agency Training**

The activation of AMBER Alert requires that designated agency personnel immediately execute pre-defined tasks in a coordinated and efficient manner. Therefore, it is essential that all personnel who potentially have a role in an activation are thoroughly trained in their assigned functions. Such training should be conducted regularly, particularly to ensure the preparedness of any newly assigned personnel.

#### **6. Testing**

Local agencies should regularly test and rehearse activation procedures in conjunction with other involved entities. This ensures that all affected individuals and organizations are clearly aware of their assigned roles and have the necessary resources available during an activation.

## Media Agencies

In most news organizations, a report of a child abduction is considered a breaking story. Prior to the activation of an AMBER Alert, each radio and television station is encouraged to develop a coordinated plan that brings together the engineering, production, talent, and newsgathering departments. The broadcast community does not participate in the specific decision-making process that triggers a particular AMBER Alert. However, the voluntary cooperation of radio and television stations is critical to the success of AMBER Alert, inasmuch as they are California's primary visual and audio connections to California's residents on a daily basis. Media agencies should address the following functions when developing plans in conjunction with law enforcement:



### 1. Receiving EAS Messages

The EAS message will be relayed from the law enforcement agency through the LP-1 to designated media outlets via the EAS "decoder," which receives the message in an audio format, not as printed text. To receive a text message, media agencies should also employ EDIS and one of its associated message-forwarding systems. Without the text message, station personnel must transcribe the audio message for re-broadcasting. Transcription is not necessary if the station sets its EAS equipment to automatically override current programming and broadcast the transmitted audio message.

### 2. Responding to EAS Messages

Time is crucial in a child abduction case; the faster the information is broadcast to the community, the better the chance for a successful recovery. Therefore, each radio and television station needs to establish proper procedures for quickly handling information received as part of an AMBER Alert.

Currently, when a child is abducted, broadcasters in many areas are using the EAS under the Civil Emergency Message event code that all stations are programmed to receive (contact OES at <http://eas.oes.ca.gov> for event code changes). Primary stations transcribe EAS messages and broadcast the alert "live" through the EAS to area broadcast stations. Messages are disseminated simultaneously to all participating radio and television stations regardless of the format or time of day. Each station monitors at least one of the EAS stations on its receivers.

The primary radio and television stations activate the EAS by sending out three digital tones, followed by a distinctive AMBER Alert tone. The broadcaster then provides summary information regarding the abduction and any other pertinent details provided by law enforcement.

Following transmission of the message, three digital data tones are sent to terminate the message. The audio message from the EAS stations simultaneously reaches each EAS receiver at participating radio and television stations area-wide. Procedures for interrupting programming will vary according to station policy and the local-area EAS Plan.

Stations may program their EAS equipment to automatically interrupt programming or may choose to transcribe the alert and rebroadcast the message using an anchor/ reporter. If a station decides to transcribe the alert, a system needs to be established within each news division to handle the transcription, since the EAS message is transmitted to the station only once.

If stations are in the middle of a newscast, the anchor/reporter can immediately break in with AMBER Alert information. If the Alert comes into the station during regular programming, a television station may create a “crawl” that would be displayed on the screen containing vital information about the abduction.

### **3. Monitoring the EDIS**

Law enforcement agencies will have access to the EDIS to disseminate text, as well as images (photographs or sketches) of the abducted child, the suspect(s), and/or vehicle(s). Posters relating to an AMBER Alert may be displayed on the EDIS Web Site and will become available to the media and the public as soon as the investigating agency is able to scan and load the image(s) and fill out the poster template. This could take place within 15 minutes of the first emergency message. Information regarding availability of the poster is distributed as soon as the poster is created. (Also see the EDIS information within the OES section of this Manual.)

### **4. Handling Calls from the Public**

If viewers or listeners call the media in response to an AMBER Alert, media staff should refer the callers to the appropriate local law enforcement agency contact number(s). If a member of the public calls to activate an AMBER Alert, the caller should be informed that the decision to activate an AMBER Alert can only be made by the appropriate law enforcement agency.





# F.C.C. EAS Local Areas



# Activating An AMBER Alert

This section outlines the key steps that law enforcement agencies should incorporate into their local AMBER Alert Plans. (These steps are also listed in the accompanying *AMBER Alert Activation Guide* which is designed as a quick reference in emergency situations.)

## STEP 1: Activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS)

Once it is confirmed that all AMBER Alert criteria have been met, and there is no extenuating investigative need that dictates otherwise, activation of the EAS is required.

- To initiate a **multi-regional** or **statewide** EAS alert, contact the California Highway Patrol (CHP), Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC), at (916) 657-8287.
- To initiate a more localized, **regional** EAS alert, contact your pre-designated local primary radio station (LP-1) in accordance with your agency's regional EAS Plan. ENTAC is available to assist in regional alerts, if needed.
- Provide available summary information for the EAS message, including the name, age, sex, physical description and clothing of the victim and suspect, vehicle description, possible direction of travel, and location and time last seen. Also include the agency's name and telephone number for the public to call with leads.

Following is an example of an EAS alert message:

**THE RIVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT IS INITIATING A CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT. 9 YR OLD JAMIE SMITH, WHITE FEMALE, BLOND HAIR, BLUE EYES, 4' TALL, WEIGHING 85 POUNDS, WAS LAST SEEN WEARING A RED TOP AND BLACK PANTS. SUSPECT IS A WHITE MALE, APPROXIMATELY 25-35 YEARS OLD, BROWN HAIR WITH A SHORT BEARD AND MUSTACHE. HE IS DRIVING A SILVER SUV, LAST SEEN HEADING NORTH TOWARDS INTERSTATE 80 FROM THE ARCADE AREA. IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THIS ABDUCTION, PLEASE CALL THE RIVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT AT (916) 555-3456 IMMEDIATELY.**

**Important Note:** The EAS is intended to be used only in time-critical circumstances in which local television and radio programming should be pre-empted by the emergency broadcast. Agencies should use proper discretion when deciding to activate the EAS in response to a child abduction.

## STEP 2: Send an “EDIS FLASH” Message via CLETS

The Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS) provides local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies with a direct computer link to media outlets and the public statewide. California law enforcement agencies can route text messages to EDIS via CLETS. The following are instructions for sending an EDIS text message intended for immediate broadcast.

- Send a **Be-On-the-Look-Out** (BOLO) Administrative Message via CLETS to all law enforcement agencies statewide using the Users Group Code 4500. The text must start with the words “EDIS FLASH”. The subject should contain the words “CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT” and city of occurrence. Include the following information in the message, if available:

- Name, age, sex and physical description of the victim
- Description of clothing
- Location and time last seen
- Description of possible suspect(s)
- Last known direction of travel and possible destination
- Investigating law enforcement agency name and telephone number for the public to call with information
- Name and telephone number of the agency contact person for the media

This broadcast will be distributed to California criminal justice agencies in the AMBER Alert broadcast code, the Nevada Highway Patrol, Oregon State Police and the OES. The media statewide also will receive this message and decide whether or not to air the alert. (Guidelines for such decisions can be pre-established in each agency’s AMBER Alert Plan.)

Following is an example of an **EDIS FLASH** message:

**E 001 4500**

**EDIS FLASH**

**SUBJECT: CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT (RIVER CITY)**

**REQUEST MEDIA BROADCASTS IMMEDIATELY**

**THE RIVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT IS INITIATING A CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT. WE ARE REQUESTING THE PUBLIC’S ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING A 9 YR OLD WHITE FEMALE. HER NAME IS JAMIE SMITH. SHE HAS BLOND HAIR, BLUE EYES, IS 4' TALL AND WEIGHS 85 POUNDS. SHE WAS LAST SEEN WEARING A RED TOP AND BLACK PANTS. POLICE BELIEVE SHE WAS ABDUCTED BY A WHITE MALE, APPROXIMATELY 25-35 YEARS OLD, BROWN HAIR WITH A SHORT BEARD AND MUSTACHE. HE IS DRIVING A SILVER SUV, LAST SEEN HEADING NORTH TOWARDS INTERSTATE 80 FROM THE ARCADE AREA. IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL (916) 555-6543 IMMEDIATELY.**

**CONTACT DETECTIVE STEVE HILL, RIVER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT AT (916) 555-3456 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.**

### Important Notes:

If EAS has been activated in response to an AMBER Alert, an EDIS FLASH message should also be sent. EDIS provides the media with printed text, unlike EAS, which transmits only audio messages that may require transcription.

All text following the words “EDIS FLASH” will be relayed to the media and the public exactly as it was entered. Also, these words should not be preceded with multiple spaces, a quotation mark, asterisk, or other characters. **Do not include in the message any confidential information intended for law enforcement use only.**

For testing and training purposes, the words “EDIS TEST” should be used instead of “EDIS FLASH” to avoid triggering various automatic-alerting systems. Also, include a statement such as “THIS IS ONLY A TEST” in the body to ensure that the message is not misinterpreted as an actual AMBER Alert.

In addition to the steps outlined in this Manual, law enforcement agencies should continue to transmit a BOLO Administrative Message via CLETS in the prescribed format to initiate an immediate regional law enforcement response to reported missing person cases, in accordance with Penal Code section 14205(a).

## STEP 3: Create a Child Abduction Poster on the Internet

As soon as photos or sketches of the victim, suspect and/or vehicle are available, create a poster on the EDIS Web Site for direct access by the media and the public.

To enter data on a poster:

- Access the EDIS Web Site at: <http://edis.oes.ca.gov/amber/>.
- Select **Post Image (Victim, Suspect or Vehicle)**, as appropriate.
- Enter your agency's pre-assigned EDIS User ID and password.
- Enter all available information in the appropriate data fields on the template provided. (Remember that this information will be read by the media and the public; use plain language and avoid law enforcement abbreviations, codes, etc). **Do not enter any confidential information intended for law enforcement use only.**

To import an image to a poster:

- Click **Browse** located on the Post Image screen. This will display a pop-up dialog

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the EDIS (Emergency Digital Information Service) "Post Victim Image" form. The browser window title is "California State Police - Message". The address bar shows "http://edis.oes.ca.gov/amber/". The page has a yellow sidebar on the left with a "Post Bulletin" section containing "Initial Report", "Post Image" (selected), "Suspect", and "Vehicle". The main content area is white and contains several form fields: "User ID:" and "Password:" at the top right; "Victim Type:" with a dropdown menu; "Missing Date:" and "Assumed Date:"; "Image File to Post (PNG or JPG):" with a "Browse..." button; "Victim's Name:"; "Missing From (City/State):"; "Reason Missing (in paragraph):"; "Last Seen (Date):"; "Agency Code #:"; and "Last Seen Time (12 hr):". There are checkboxes for "AMBER (Print Alert/BOLO)", "Report (provided)", "True", and "Image Status" with "New" and "Updated" options. The OES logo is in the top right corner.




box listing various files in your computer from which you may import an image. Double-click on the file containing the image to be imported. The file name will be shown in the "Image File to Post" data field. (Note: Images must be in JPEG or GIF format and may not exceed 250 KB.) The image will be uploaded automatically when you submit the template form.

- Click **Post Image** located at the bottom of the screen. A draft of the poster containing the image and information will be displayed. Carefully review the poster for accuracy.
- Click **OK**, if the information is accurate (or press **Cancel** to correct any information).

The poster has been added to the EDIS Web Site. This will generate EDIS and CLETS messages notifying law enforcement and the media that the poster is available. The poster will also be accessible to the public at **[www.edis.ca.gov](http://www.edis.ca.gov)**.

If your agency does not have an EDIS user account or is otherwise unable to create a poster on the EDIS Web Site, you may e-mail your image(s) and data to CHP's ENTAC at **[erchq@chp.ca.gov](mailto:erchq@chp.ca.gov)**. This process should be coordinated with ENTAC at (916) 657-8287.

**Please help locate this Abducted Child**



Name: Nicole Timmons Age: 10  
Abducted from: City of Riverside Last seen: 8/19/02, 9:00 PM  
White Female - Height: 4'6", Weight: , Hair: Brown, Eyes: Hazel  
Clothing: Light Blue Powerpuff t-shirt, yellow shorts, flip flops.  
DOB: 10/15/91  
Reported to: Riverside Police Dept. Case:  
Other information:  
She was discovered missing from her bedroom under suspicious circumstances. Missing from 5669 Durango Street, in the City of Riverside. Suspect is Glen Park, white male, date of birth 03/03/54, 6'2", red and grey hair, blue eyes. Associated vehicle is blue and white 1982 Dodge Pickup truck, license 6L02285, with grey primer and a dent near the driver's side mirror.  
Persons with information please contact:  
Riverside Police Dept. - 909-961-3229  
Reported to: Riverside Police Dept. 8/20/02, 7:25 AM  
Posted Tue Aug 20 14:10:00 2002 by Office of Emergency Services (salcom)

## TRAK Flyers

TRAK (Technology to Recover Abducted Kids) is a proprietary image-based system used to disseminate flyers on missing persons cases, similar to fax. TRAK is currently available in California to over 350 city, county, state and federal agencies, plus certain media outlets and airports. Even if your agency has created the poster on the EDIS Web Site, it is still advisable to create a TRAK flyer for statewide dissemination. For agencies without TRAK equipment, the



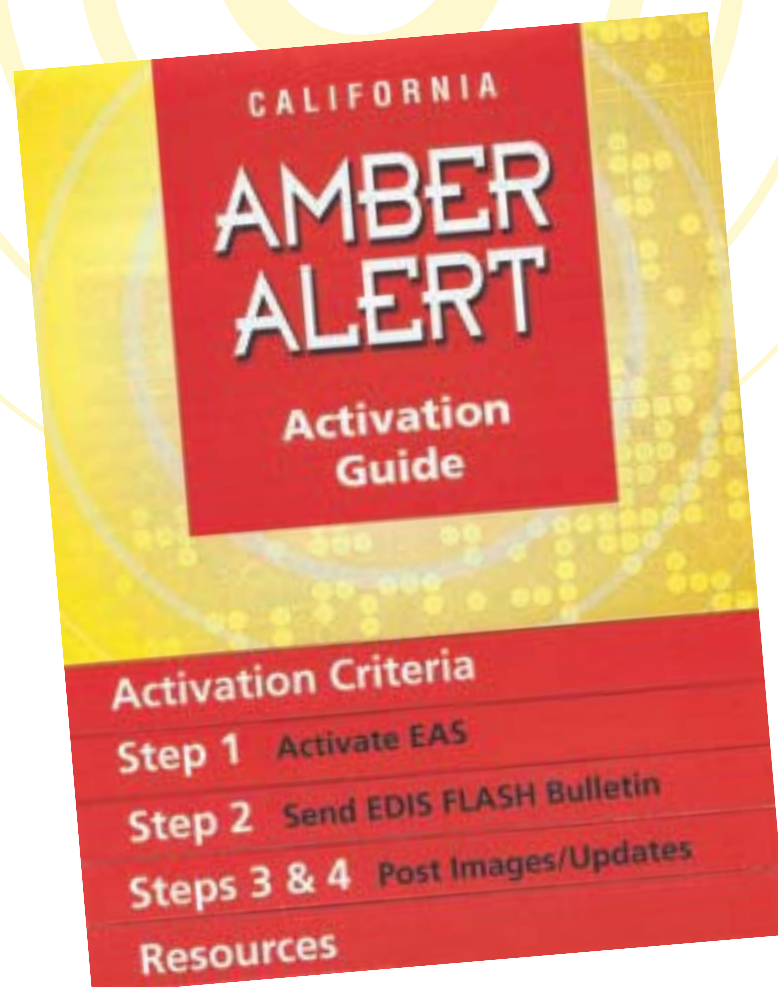
CHP's ENTAC is available to provide assistance in creating and distributing TRAK flyers on missing or abducted children. For assistance, call ENTAC at (916) 657-8287.

## **STEP 4: Initiate Alert Updates/Cancellations, as appropriate**

Any updates or cancellation of an AMBER Alert should be sent to all affected agencies on a timely basis. Transmit the appropriate information via CLETS in the form of an EDIS FLASH, using the same format as in Step 2. Original EDIS messages cannot be modified once they are transmitted; therefore, any corrections or updates to the messages require a new transmission.

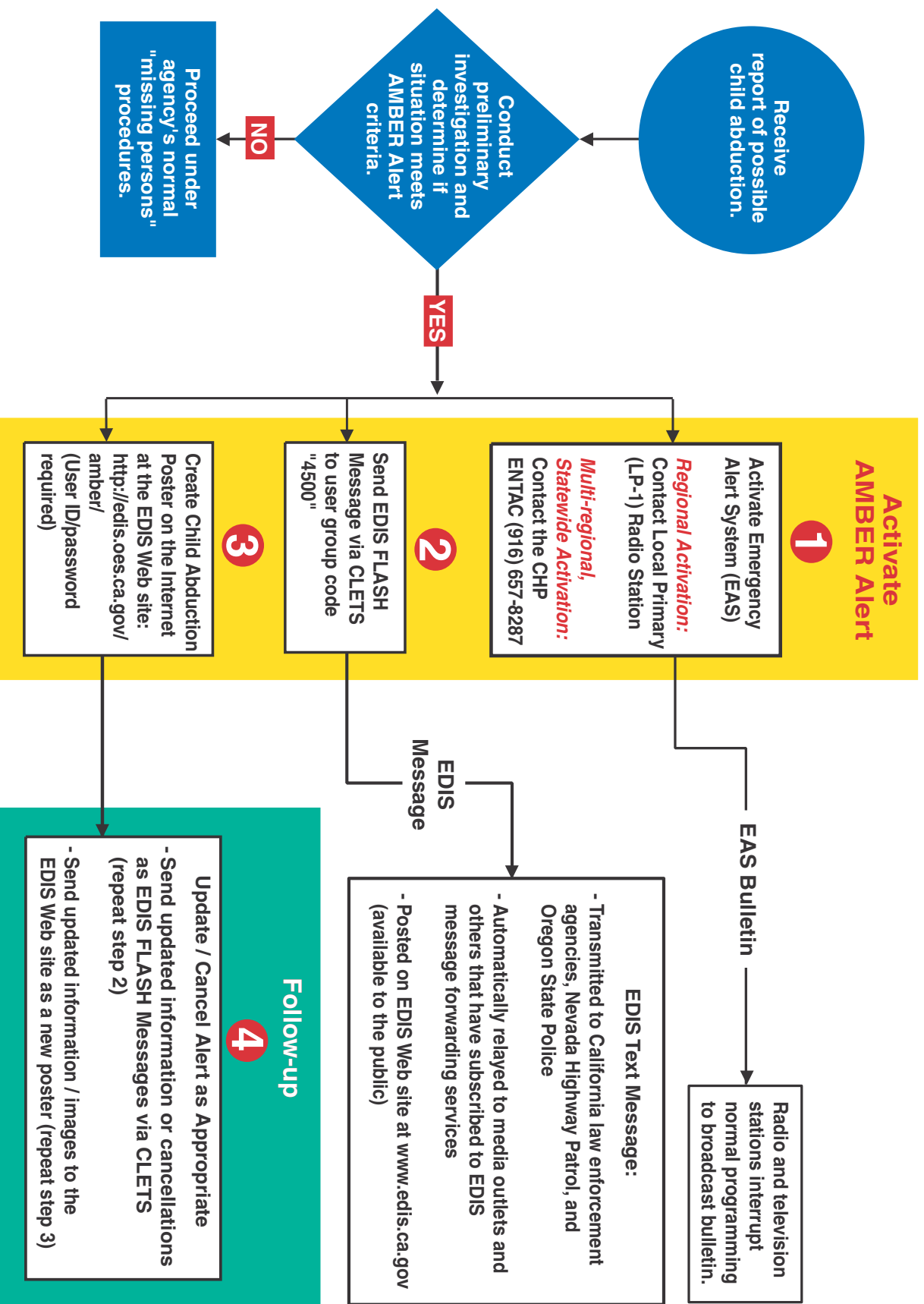
To include new images or information on a poster stored on the EDIS Web Site, repeat Step 3 to create a new poster; posters stored on the Web Site cannot be modified. Law enforcement and the media automatically will be notified when new posters are created. Posters will be retained on the EDIS Web Site for up to four weeks, as specified by the user during the poster creation process.

Law enforcement and the media should handle updates or cancellations with the same priority as the initial alert. For assistance in canceling an AMBER Alert, agencies should call the CHP's ENTAC at (916) 657-8287.



# California's AMBER Alert

## Activation Steps for Law Enforcement



# Support Agencies

## **California Highway Patrol**

(800) TELL-CHP (835-5247)

[www.chp.ca.gov](http://www.chp.ca.gov)

- Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC)

(916) 657-8287

E-mail: [erchq@chp.ca.gov](mailto:erchq@chp.ca.gov)

Dialing 911 from any cellular phone in California will connect you to the nearest CHP dispatch center.

## **Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES)**

[www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov)

The OES Warning Center can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at:

(800) 421-2921 or (916) 845-8911

- EDIS Program

[www.edis.ca.gov](http://www.edis.ca.gov)

(916) 845-8610

E-mail: [info@edis.oes.ca.gov](mailto:info@edis.oes.ca.gov)

- FCC Emergency Alert System (EAS) Rules

[www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)

## **Office of the Attorney General California Department of Justice**

[www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov)

- Command Center

(916) 227-3244 (including after-hour emergencies)

- Violent Crime Information Center

(916) 227-3280

- Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit

[www.ag.ca.gov/missing](http://www.ag.ca.gov/missing)

(916) 227-3290 (24 hour) Fax: (916) 227-3270

E-mail: [missing.persons@doj.ca.gov](mailto:missing.persons@doj.ca.gov)

24 hour Hotline (800) 222-FIND (222-3463)

TRAK: (916) 227-2761

- Investigative Services Program

(916) 227-4736



**Office of the Attorney General  
California Department of Justice** continued

- Sex Offender Tracking Program  
(916) 227-3288
- Sexual Predator Apprehension Teams (SPAT)  
Office hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (after hours, please contact the DOJ Command Center)
  - Sacramento: (916) 464-2001
  - Redding: (530) 225-2830
  - San Francisco: (415) 351-3374
  - Fresno: (559) 457-5030
  - Los Angeles: (323) 869-3400
  - San Diego: (858) 268-5400
  - Orange: (714) 558-4183
  - Riverside: (909) 782-4313
- Office of Victim Services  
(877) 433-9069 (toll free)
- Crime and Violence Prevention Center  
[www.ag.ca.gov/cvpc](http://www.ag.ca.gov/cvpc)

**Federal Bureau of Investigation**

- Los Angeles: (310) 477-6565
- Sacramento: (916) 481-9110
- San Diego: (619) 514-5500
- San Francisco: (415) 553-2000

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**

(800) THE LOST (843-5678)  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

**Technology to Recover Abducted Kids (TRAK)**

(800) 724-8725  
[www.trak.org](http://www.trak.org)

# Statutory References

**BILL NUMBER: AB 415** CHAPTERED

BILL TEXT

CHAPTER 517

FILED WITH SECRETARY OF STATE SEPTEMBER 13, 2002

APPROVED BY GOVERNOR SEPTEMBER 12, 2002

PASSED THE ASSEMBLY AUGUST 22, 2002

PASSED THE SENATE AUGUST 21, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 19, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 7, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 5, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 27, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 18, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 26, 2001

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 16, 2001

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 30, 2001

INTRODUCED BY Assembly Members Runner and Maddox

(Principal coauthor: Senator McPherson)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bates, Hollingsworth, La Suer, and Pescetti)

FEBRUARY 20, 2001

An act to add Section 8594 to the Government Code, relating to emergency services, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 415, Runner. Emergency services: Emergency Alert System. Existing law authorizes use of the Emergency Alert System to inform the public of local, state, and national emergencies. This bill would require law enforcement agencies that are informed of the abduction of a child 17 years of age or younger, or an individual with a proven mental or physical disability, and that determine the victim is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death and that there is information available that, if disseminated to the general public, could assist with the safe recovery of the victim, to request, absent extenuating investigative needs, activation of the Emergency Alert System within the appropriate local area. By imposing new duties on local law enforcement agencies, the bill would create a state-mandated local program. This bill would require the California Highway Patrol, in consultation with the Department of Justice and representatives from other organizations, to develop policies and procedures providing

instruction specifying how law enforcement agencies, broadcasters participating in the Emergency Alert System, and any other intermediate emergency services agencies that may institute activation of the Emergency Alert System and, where appropriate, other supplemental warning systems shall proceed after a qualifying abduction has been reported to a law enforcement agency.

The bill would require the California Highway Patrol, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, to develop a comprehensive child abduction education program. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000. This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions. This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

(a) In the year 2000, the California Missing and Unidentified Persons System reflected that there were 695 child abduction cases that involved a stranger abduction or suspicious circumstances that may have indicated a stranger abduction. In Los Angeles County alone, there were 84 child abduction cases that involved a stranger abduction or suspicious circumstances that may have indicated a stranger abduction.

(b) It is essential to utilize maximum public participation to recover children in the most serious child abduction situations.

(c) In child abduction circumstances, law enforcement has information available to disseminate to the general public, that could assist in the safe recovery of the victim, the apprehension of the suspect, or both.

(d) The Amber Plan, first created in Dallas, Texas after the murder of Amber Hagerman, a 9-year-old girl who was abducted in 1996 from her home in Arlington, Texas, makes the Emergency Alert System available for use by law enforcement officials to alert the general public when a child has been abducted and is believed to be in danger.

(e) The goal of the Amber Plan is to coordinate the services of government, law enforcement, and broadcasting agencies in an effort to expedite the recovery of abducted children by coercing the kidnapper to release the child for fear of being caught.

(f) The Amber Plan requires law enforcement to meet certain criteria when evaluating a child abduction before an activation can occur. Therefore, the Amber Plan is not activated for every abduction or custody dispute.

(g) Tragedies, such as those concerning Polly Klaas and Amber Swartz, inspired the Chiefs of Police and the Sheriff's Association of Orange County and Attorney General Bill Lockyer's Office

of Victim' s Services to develop the Child Abduction Regional Emergency (C.A.R.E.) Alert Program, modeled after the Amber Plan, as a pilot project in Orange County.

(h) The goal of the C.A.R.E. Alert Program is the safe return of an abducted child by establishing an effective partnership between the community, the media, and law enforcement. A C.A.R.E. alert is the recruitment, via a widespread media alert, of public assistance to locate a child.

(i) The Governor and the California Highway Patrol, in consultation with the Department of Justice, shall implement the use of the Emergency Alert System and other current warning systems in use and establish them statewide so that the statewide system resembles the Amber Plan, Texas' early-warning system to respond to child kidnappings.

SEC. 2. Section 8594 is added to the Government Code, to read:

8594. (a) If an abduction has been reported to a law enforcement agency and the agency determines that a child 17 years of age or younger, or an individual with a proven mental or physical disability, has been abducted and is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death, and there is information available that, if disseminated to the general public, could assist in the safe recovery of the victim, the agency, through a person authorized to activate the Emergency Alert System, shall, absent extenuating investigative needs, request activation of the Emergency Alert System within the appropriate local area. Law enforcement agencies shall only request activation of the Emergency Alert System for an abduction if these requirements are met. The Emergency Alert System is not intended to be used for abductions resulting from custody disputes that are not reasonably believed to endanger the life or physical health of a child.

The California Highway Patrol, if requested by a law enforcement agency, shall activate the system.

(b) The California Highway Patrol, in consultation with the Department of Justice, as well as a representative from the California State Sheriffs' Association, the California Police Chiefs' Association, and the California Peace Officers' Association, shall develop policies and procedures providing instruction specifying how law enforcement agencies, broadcasters participating in the Emergency Alert System, and any other intermediate emergency agencies that may institute activation of the Emergency Alert System, and, where appropriate, other supplemental warning systems, shall proceed after a qualifying abduction has been reported to a law enforcement agency. Those policies and procedures shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Procedures for transfer of information regarding the abducted victim and abduction from the law enforcement agency to the broadcasters;

(2) Specification of the event code or codes that should be used if the Emergency Alert System is activated to report a qualifying child abduction;

(3) Recommended language for an abduction alert;

(4) Specification of information that must be included by the reporting law enforcement agency, including which agency a person with information relating to the abduction should contact and how the person should contact the agency; and

(5) Recommendations on the extent of the geographical area to which a child abduction emergency alert should be broadcast.

(c) The California Highway Patrol, in consultation with the Department of Justice, shall review the Amber Plan as adopted by other states and Orange County's Child Abduction Regional Emergency Alert Program for guidance in developing appropriate policies and procedures for use of the Emergency Alert System and, where appropriate, other supplemental warning systems to report qualifying abductions.

(d) The California Highway Patrol, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, shall develop a comprehensive child abduction education system to educate children in the state on the appropriate behavior to deter abduction. The California Highway Patrol shall convene a group consisting of a representative from the California State Sheriffs' Association, the California Police Chiefs' Association, and the California Peace Officers' Association, representatives of advocacy groups, and the Department of Education to assist in the development of a plan.

SEC. 3. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

SEC. 4. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to ensure the expedient development of a statewide child abduction alert program to deter child abductions and immediately help aid in the recovery of abducted children, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.



## California Penal Code Section 14205

(a) All local police and sheriffs' departments shall accept any report, including any telephonic report, of a missing person, including runaways, without delay and shall give priority to the handling of these reports over the handling of reports relating to crimes involving property. In cases where the person making a report of a missing person or runaway, contacts, including by telephone, the California Highway Patrol, the California Highway Patrol may take the report, and shall immediately advise the person making the report of the name and telephone number of the police or sheriff's department having jurisdiction of the residence address of the missing person and of the name and telephone number of the police or sheriff's department having jurisdiction of the place where the person was last seen. In cases of reports involving missing persons, including, but not limited to, runaways, the local police or sheriff's department shall immediately take the report and make an assessment of reasonable steps to be taken to locate the person. If the missing person is under 16 years of age, or there is evidence that the person is at risk, the department shall broadcast a "Be On the Look-Out" bulletin, without delay, within its jurisdiction.

(b) If the person reported missing is under 16 years of age, or if there is evidence that the person is at risk, the local police, sheriff's department, or the California Highway Patrol shall submit the report to the Attorney General's office within four hours after accepting the report. After the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System online missing person registry becomes operational, the reports shall be submitted, within four hours after accepting the report, to the Attorney General's office through the use of the California Telecommunications System.



# Sample Local Plans

## Orange County



### **Child Abduction Regional Emergency**

A Law Enforcement and Media Partnership to Bring Abducted and Missing Children Home Safely

Presented by the  
Orange County Sheriff's Department  
Sheriff Michael S. Carona,  
in cooperation with the State of California,  
Office of the Governor and Attorney General

## **C.A.R.E. ALERT**

### **Child Abduction Regional Emergency**

#### **I. Purpose**

The goal of the C.A.R.E. Alert program is the safe return of an abducted child by establishing an effective partnership between the community, the media, and law enforcement.

#### **II. History**

A C.A.R.E. Alert is the recruitment of public assistance to locate an abducted child via a wide spread media alert. Utilizing the assistance of Southern California radio, television and press affiliates the public will be notified of the circumstances of a child's abduction and how they can assist law enforcement in the child's recovery.

#### **III. Authority**

The Orange County Chiefs and Sheriff's Association approved the initial procedure on December 13, 1999, and approved additions/changes on August 7, 2002.

#### **IV. Application**

While the operating protocol and procedures contained herein are generally recommended for use by all Orange County law enforcement agencies, each individual agency retains the discretion to adopt, reject, or modify any portion of these guidelines in accordance with existing rules and regulations of that agency.

#### **V. Policy/Procedure**

##### **Child Abduction Criteria**

Abduction is defined as the following: A child under the age of 18, which has been unwillingly removed from their environment without permission from the child's legal guardian or a designated legal representative.

The C.A.R.E. Alert should only be implemented in cases of:

1. A confirmed abduction (non-family);
2. In the event of a parental abduction in which there is information the child is being removed from California or United States jurisdiction; or
3. The victim of a parental abduction faces the threat of injury or death; or
4. When circumstances surrounding a child's disappearance are unknown, an alert may be implemented after sufficient time has elapsed and investigation has taken place, which eliminate other alternative explanations for the child's absence.

With these criteria in place, the Police or Sheriff's Watch Commander or the assigned Investigative Unit Supervisor will know when it is appropriate to inform the media of the child abduction via a C.A.R.E. Alert.

Upon adopting the C.A.R.E. Protocol each agency should identify in advance those individuals who can approve and/or initiate a C.A.R.E. Alert in their jurisdiction.

A committee designated by the COPSA President will review all implementations of a C.A.R.E. Alert to insure the approved protocol and procedures are being followed and were effective. Based upon their review, the committee will make appropriate recommendations regarding protocol or procedural changes.

### **Procedures**

In the event of a confirmed child abduction the following procedures designed to alert the media shall be followed.

1. The handling Law Enforcement Agency will prepare an initial press release that includes all of the available information, such as:

- The child's identity, age, and description.
- If known, the suspect's identity, age, and description.
- Pertinent vehicle description.
- Details, if known, regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, etc.
- Identify a media liaison or Press Information Officer, and provide a telephone number for the media to call for additional information or updates.
- A telephone number for the public to call in with leads/information. (Refer to mutual aid information contained herein.)

2. The handling agency or Control One will then telephone the following media alert system and provide them with the red channel broadcast information.

- Media Page (310) 838-1436

This is a voice activated paging system.

3. The handling agency or Control One will then fax the press release to the following locations:

- Associated Press - Los Angeles Bureau  
FAX # (213) 346-0200  
Office number (213) 626-1200
- Associated Press - Orange County Bureau  
FAX # (714) 573-7888
- City News Service  
FAX # (310) 201-2124  
Office number (310) 201-9145 /201-9120

3. If Mutual Aid services are not activated or requested, the information in the C.A.R.E. Alert should also be forwarded to the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Communications Bureau so that general broadcasts can be made to Southern California Law Enforcement agencies, and so that the Emergency Alert System (EAS) may be utilized.

Control One Supervisor - Telephone # (714) 628-7008

Patrol Watch Commander - Telephone # (714) 628-7170

FAX # (714) 628-7010

4. The handling Law Enforcement Agency will prepare and fax to the locations described above follow-up press releases with updates regarding the search and investigation, or immediately upon locating the abducted child.



### **Mutual Aid**

The experiences of other law enforcement jurisdictions that have implemented similar plans indicate a C.A.R.E. Alert will generate a high volume of telephone calls to the handling agency.

Law Enforcement Agencies whose equipment or staffing levels will not support a higher volume of telephone inquiries may utilize the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Communications Bureau facilities and staff as "call takers."

In this event, notify the Sheriff's Department Watch Commander of your incident and request for assistance at telephone number (714) 628-7170. He/she will provide you with a telephone number for the public to call.

In your press release direct the public to the telephone number provided by the Sheriff's Department Watch Commander.

The handling Law Enforcement Agency will continue to handle all press releases and media inquiries. Any press inquiries received by the Sheriff's Department will be referred back to the handling Law Enforcement Agency.

The handling Law Enforcement Agency shall assign a minimum of two detectives/officers to respond to the Sheriff's Department Emergency Communications Bureau to screen and relay information and 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 Bureau.

## Control One

In the event of a C.A.R.E. Alert a red channel broadcast will be followed by the initiation of a widespread media and law enforcement alert via telephone and fax.

### Step One

Activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS) with the C.A.R.E. Alert information via fax. A completed C.A.R.E. Alert fax or telephone advisory should be sent to the EAS sites in the following counties.

- Orange County
- Imperial County
- Los Angeles County
- Riverside County
- San Bernardino County
- San Diego County
- Ventura County

### Step Two

California Highway Patrol

Orange County Communications Center (949) 559-7880

#### Electronic Road Warning Signs

- If suspect vehicle information exists the local CHP communications center will activate an electronic road sign "Child Abduction" Alert in Southern California. Motorists will be directed to telephone in suspect sightings to (800) TELL CHP.

#### Statewide Resources

- If the passage of time necessitates an expansion of the regional alert, the CHP Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC) can initiate large scale EAS and EDIS alerts upon request, as well as expand the use of the electronic road signs throughout California.

### Step Three

A completed C.A.R.E. Alert fax or telephone advisory should be sent to the following locations.

#### Media Wire Services:

- Associated Press (213) 346-0200 - fax
- City News Service (310) 201-9124 - fax

A telephone call should be placed to Media Page, which is a voice activated paging system. After identifying yourself and agency, the information in the C.A.R.E. Alert should be read to the call taker.

- Media Page (310) 838-1436

Law Enforcement Communication sites:

- California Highway Patrol
- Los Angeles County Sheriff
- Los Angeles Police Department
- San Diego County Sheriff
- San Diego Police Department
- Riverside County Sheriff
- San Bernardino County Sheriff
- U.S. Border Patrol

## Step Four

Transmit a C.A.R.E. Alert message via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System. (CLETS) Include the mnemonic coding in the CLETS message to activate the Emergency Digital Information System. (EDIS) This message should be an administrative message directed to group code 3200 (all law enforcement) and mnemonic OES 0 (OES zero).

The first line should read "EDIS Flash, followed by "Child Abduction Alert". The remaining text should contain the C.A.R.E. Alert details and end with the characters "NNNN". This message will be automatically forwarded to designated media agencies via the Office of Emergency Services (OES) Emergency Digital Information System for immediate public release.

## Step Five

Send Beyond Missing e-mail and fax notification to law enforcement agencies within a 200-mile radius of the abduction. Access and submission is via a password-protected account on the Internet Web Page for Beyond Missing.

## Step Six

Fax or telephone updates to all of the above referenced resources or media locations on a regular basis, or immediately upon locating the abducted or missing child.

The C.A.R.E Alert was developed by Sgt. Christine Murray, Criminal Investigation Division Orange County Sheriff's Department, and Ms. Nina Salarno-Ashford, former Director of the Office of Victim Services, California Attorney General's Office

They gratefully acknowledge the Amber Alert Program in Dallas-Fort Worth, TX for creating the initial concept of a law enforcement and radio broadcasting partnership.

Development of the C.A.R.E. Alert was aided by input from the Radio and Television News Association, Orange County News Channel, KFWB news radio AM 980 and KWVE Radio FM 107.9

Operational solutions and Mutual Aid support were identified and provided by the Emergency Communications Bureau, under the leadership of Captain Catherine Zurn, and the Criminal Investigation Division, under the leadership of Captain Steve Carroll

For additional information about the C.A.R.E. Alert program or to receive a copy of the C.A.R.E. Alert training video please contact the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Sgt. Christine Murray at (714) 647-7040 , or via e-mail at [cmurray@ocsd.org](mailto:cmurray@ocsd.org)

# **San Diego County**



## **SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHILD ABDUCTION REGIONAL EMERGENCY ALERT (C.A.R.E. ALERT) PROCEDURE**

### **GOAL**

The swift location and recovery of abducted children through rapid public notification.

### **OBJECTIVE**

The development of a communications partnership between local broadcast media, regional law enforcement agencies, and emergency services personnel to alert the public immediately following a child abduction utilizing the Emergency Alert System.

### **ALERT ACTIVATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. The victim must be a minor, 17 years or younger, or have a proven mental or physical disability; AND
2. The victim must have been removed from their environment by someone other than a parent without parent/guardian permission; AND
3. Be considered to be in great danger

## **ALERT ACTIVATION PROCEDURE**

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

1. A law enforcement supervisor will determine that the circumstances surrounding the report of a missing child meet the criteria for an alert activation.
2. The law enforcement supervisor will prepare a brief (less than 2 minute) announcement with victim and suspect information. The announcement should include this information:
  - A child has reportedly been abducted;
  - Where the abduction took place;
  - When the abduction took place;
  - A description of the child;
  - A description of the abductor;
  - A description of the vehicle involved, if any;
  - The last known direction of travel;
  - A telephone number to contact the police with information;
  - A statement that no action should be taken other than to inform police.
3. The law enforcement supervisor will telephone the Communications Center Watch Commander at the San Diego Sheriff's Department at (XXX) XXX-XXXX and notify him/her of the intent to activate the alert. In the event that the Sheriff's Department is unable to initiate an alert the San Diego Police Department is the alternate and the San Diego Police Duty Lieutenant should be contacted at (XXX) XXX-XXXX
4. The Communications Center Watch Commander will confirm the requestor's identity with the requesting agency.
5. Whenever possible, the law enforcement supervisor will transmit the announcement in writing to the Communications Center Watch Commander, either by fax or email. If conditions preclude transmitting the written information, the Watch Commander may take the information over the telephone.
6. The initiating law enforcement agency will be responsible for complying with reporting procedures as required by Penal Code Section 14205, relative to the Missing Unidentified Persons System. They will also be responsible for advising other local agencies of the Child Abduction Emergency and will provide media contact information.
7. Employment of other elements of the California Child Safety AMBER Network such as Technology to Recover Abducted Kids (TRAK), California Emergency Digital Information System



(EDIS), Caltrans CMS (changeable message signs), or the launch of a Statewide EAS alert through the California Highway Patrol will be the responsibility of the initiating agency.

8. Training and implementation of this procedure will be the responsibility of each participating law enforcement agency.

9. The Communications Center Watch Commander will telephone the Local Primary Radio Station (LP1 or LP2) and state the following:

**“This is (name/title) of (Agency). I am requesting an activation of the Emergency Alert System for a Child Abduction Emergency”.**

10. The Communications Center Watch Commander will request a fax number from the LP1 contact and request that he/she standby for a fax transmission. The LP1 Contact will provide a fax number after completing the identity confirmation process described below.

#### **RADIO STATION RESPONSIBILITY (LP1 or LP2)**

1. The LP1 contact person will acknowledge the request. Both parties will disconnect the telephone. The LP1 will initiate a callback to a previously designated telephone number to confirm the Watch Commander’s identity. Upon confirmation, the LP1 contact will provide the Watch Commander with the requested fax number. Any attempt by a caller to have the callback made to any number other than those designated and on file at the LP1 will result in the LP1 ignoring the activation request.

2. The LP1 contact will standby to receive the faxed information.

3. The LP1 contact will be responsible for the recording and transmission of the written announcement via the Emergency Alert System to all participating broadcast stations and cable facilities.

### **ALERT CANCELLATION PROCEDURE**

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

1. The initiating law enforcement agency is responsible for update and cancellation of any alert activation through its regular media/information release procedures and will notify all allied law enforcement agencies.

