

11-003 Alert Los Angeles (LA) County

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services



ALERT LOS ANGELES COUNTY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to establish policy and procedures for the use of the Alert Los Angeles County notification system.

BACKGROUND

The County of Los Angeles has implemented an emergency notification system known as Alert LA County. It is a web-based, community-alert notification system designed to transmit mass telephone calls or text messages to residents and businesses in a timely manner during emergencies or disasters.

When activated, the system uses the 911 database and precise Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technology to quickly target and disseminate emergency information to the public. The messages are text and voice recorded to notify populations on how to proceed during an ongoing emergency. The 911 database does not include cellular/wireless and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) numbers. Individuals using cellular and VOIP phones can register their numbers online at www.alert.lacounty.gov to receive the emergency notifications. For persons using a TTY/TDD phone system, the Alert LA County system will automatically recognize their communication device and text the message to them.

It is important to understand that the Alert LA County system is used in conjunction with other notification and alerting tools, recognizing that no single tool will provide warning to all citizens in all situations. The Alert LA County system is a component of the overall emergency notification plan and should not be seen as the only means of emergency notification. Areas with existing notification systems may continue to use their own system independent of the Alert LA County system.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Alert LA County system may be requested for emergency situations to notify citizens within the County of Los Angeles as deemed necessary by any incident commander (IC) or their designee. The Alert LA County system shall be activated upon the request of an IC in conjunction with the approval of the Sheriff's Information Bureau (SIB) 24 Hour Operations Center Watch Sergeant.

Examples of information that may be communicated through the Alert LA County system are: Urgent information related to police, fire, or public health emergencies affecting County of Los Angeles residents:

- Notification of critical missing adult/children;
- Notification of a search for a fleeing felon;
- Evacuation of a specified area;
- Disaster notification; and
- Public safety tests to verify data accuracy and system operability

The governing principle of the Alert LA County system is that the notification to the public will help save lives, protect health, and reduce the potential for injury. The Alert LA County system shall not be used for any non-governmental purpose. It shall not be used for political messages, for-profit activity, personal messages, advertising of any product or service, or improper or erroneous messages. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Tactical Planning Section of the Emergency Operations Bureau (EOB) and SIB 24 Hour Operations Center shall jointly manage the Alert LA County system, oversee the daily operation of the Alert LA County system, resolve operational issues, ensure sufficient authorized trained users to operate the system, and ensure that the system is tested regularly.

INITIATING AN ALERT LA COUNTY NOTIFICATION

The following procedures shall be followed to initiate a notification through the Alert LA County system:

Intra-Department Activations

If the DOC is activated, all events related to the activation shall be initiated from the DOC. If a request comes into the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center that is unrelated to the DOC activation, the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center shall be responsible for sending out the alert.

If the DOC is not activated, the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center Watch Sergeant will make the decision to launch the emergency notification based on established policies. If a question of justification to use the system arises, the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center Watch Sergeant shall consult with the EOB Duty Sergeant. When questions remain, the final authority remains with the Department's Homeland Security Division Commander.

Outside Agency Activations

All outside agencies requesting the use of the Alert LA County system shall contact the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center at [REDACTED TEXT]

If the DOC is activated and the request is related to the DOC activation, the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center shall transfer the call to the DOC. The SIB 24 Hour Operations Center will continue to handle any notifications unrelated to the ongoing incident.

The IC or designee shall answer the following questions using the Alert LA County System Notification Request Worksheet (SH-R-477):

- Does the incident constitute an imminent threat to life, health, or property within the County of Los Angeles, and will this notification help reduce the loss of life and/or property?;
- Does the incident require the public to take specific protective action?
What is the threat? (Give a description); and
- What is the affected area that needs notification? (Describe the area, size, and scope).
- Indicate the message to be sent and specific actions to be taken (Not more than 30 seconds).

The system may also be activated for involuntary, at-risk, and critical missing person/child as described in MPP 5-09/120. The message must be sent to a targeted area that may help find the person/child. The SIB 24 Hour Operations Center Watch Sergeant will make the decision to launch the emergency notification based on the established policies. If a question of justification to use the system arises, the SIB 24 Hour Operations Center Watch Sergeant shall consult with the EOB Duty Sergeant. If a question still arises, they may both consult with the Special Operations Division Commander.

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

The System Coordinators will test the Alert LA County system on a quarterly basis to ensure that it is working properly. SCC shall coordinate a quarterly testing schedule for the Alert LA County notification system. An actual activation may serve in lieu of quarterly testing. The system test shall utilize an area within LA County equal to at least 500 residents. The message shall indicate that this is only a test and not an actual emergency.

REFERENCES

[MPP 5-09/120.00 Missing Persons - \(Definitions\)](#)

ATTACHMENTS

[Alert LA County System Notification Request Worksheet \(SH-R-477\)](#)
