

## 5-09/120.51 - Feather Alert

Effective January 1, 2023, the State of California enacted Government Code section 8594.13, which created a new missing person alert for indigenous women/persons who go missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances. The Legislature intends to provide law enforcement with additional tools to disseminate timely, accurate information to engage the public more effectively in assisting with locating missing indigenous people and to compensate for the unique challenges that indigenous communities face in accessing media coverage and the ability to share information. The California Emergency Services Act authorizes use of the Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC) to inform the public of local, state, and national emergencies. Existing law requires a law enforcement agency to activate the Emergency Alert System within the appropriate area when that agency identifies critical alert criteria.

A **Feather Alert** will be activated when specific criteria involving an indigenous person are met. It allows the California Highway Patrol to issue a be-on-the-lookout alert, electronic flyer, or changeable message signs in cases where a vehicle may be involved, and specific identifying information about the vehicle is available for public dissemination.

A **Feather Alert** may be requested when sworn Department personnel are dispatched to a call regarding a missing person and identify the following criteria:

- The missing person is an indigenous woman or indigenous person;
- Available local and tribal resources have been utilized;
- The person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances;
- The person is in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, or environment or weather conditions; or the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person; or there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril; and
- There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

Investigating personnel shall contact the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the missing persons tribal area to advise them of the reported missing person and request their cooperation in determining if the person is indeed missing under the above circumstances. If the missing person's tribe does not have a law enforcement agency, investigating personnel should contact the Tribal Leader of the tribe and the local sheriff's department that has jurisdiction over the tribal area for assistance. Investigating personnel should contact Homicide Bureau Missing Persons Detail or Major Crimes Bureau, in the case of abductions, if they need assistance in contacting the local law enforcement agency or if they have any questions.

If the above-listed criteria are met and the missing person is an adult, investigating personnel shall notify the Homicide Bureau, on-call detective, at (323) 890-5500 and a copy of the approved report will be emailed to the Homicide Bureau Missing Person Unit (MissingPersons2@lasd.org). If the missing person is a juvenile, investigating personnel shall notify that station's on-call detective.

Investigating personnel shall request the Sheriff's Communications Center (SCC) to activate a **Feather Alert** if the specific criteria are identified. When criteria for multiple Emergency Alerts are met, SCC will determine which alert(s) are initiated.

Department personnel shall also follow existing Department policy and procedures pertaining to missing persons, as directed in the following Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) section(s), where applicable:

- 5-09/120.00, Missing Persons (Definitions)
- 5-09/120.03, Missing Persons
- 5-09/120.04, Missing Person Check Off Forms
- 5-09/120.05, Missing Children
- 5-09/120.50, Missing Adults

#### **SHERIFF'S COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The final decision to initiate a **Feather Alert** shall be the responsibility of the SCC Watch Commander. After receiving the information from the Station/Unit and consulting the Station/Unit Watch Commander, the SCC Watch Commander shall determine if the information meets the **Feather Alert** criteria. If the criteria are not met, the SCC Watch Commander will discuss other available options with the Station/Unit Watch Commander and Homicide Bureau's Missing Person Detail to determine the best course of action.

If a **Feather Alert** is initiated, the SCC Watch Commander shall ensure that the Sheriff's Information Bureau is notified of the **Feather Alert** and local Tribal Law Enforcement at the following:

US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Office of Justice Services, District IX (California)  
(916) 978-6057

If it is emergent and the Watch Commander cannot reach the above listed contact and still needs to speak with someone, they may call the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (833) 560-2065.

All necessary data shall be immediately entered into the JDIC screen to notify the Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS) of an abduction.

An audio message shall be recorded describing the abductor, the victim, and any vehicle or other pertinent information. This audio message will be used on the Emergency Alert System. Photographs of the victim will not, in most cases, be available for the initial JDIC/EDIS message. Therefore, once the JDIC/EDIS message is complete, with or without the photograph, it shall be sent immediately.

After the EDIS alert has been broadcast, the SCC Watch Commander shall initiate an Emergency Alert System warning message. This EAS warning message will be distributed to various media agencies.

Upon receipt of any photographs, SCC shall forward all scanned images of the victim/suspect via e-mail to the California Highway Patrol Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC). After the e-mail has been sent, the SCC Watch Commander shall telephone ENTAC to confirm receipt of photographs and request they be entered into the TRAK system. The SCC Watch Commander shall also request the Department of the California Highway Patrol to begin posting victim/suspect/vehicle information on Changeable Message Signs within the designated target area.

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