

## Public Alerts

### 317.1 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.

### 317.2 POLICY

Public alerts may be employed using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), 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.

### 317.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 317.3.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Fargo Police Department should notify their supervisor, Shift Commander or Investigation 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.

#### 317.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor apprised of the need for a public alert is responsible for making 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 Public 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

### 317.4 AMBER ALERTS™

AMBER Alerts™ are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding abducted children (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-01).

#### 317.4.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria are used to determine if an AMBER Alert should be issued (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-04):

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- (a) The abduction involves a child 17 years of age or younger.
- (b) There is confirmation the child is believed to be in grave danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- (c) There is descriptive information about the child, the abductor, and/or the suspect's vehicle to assist with the safe recovery of the victim and/or the apprehension of the suspect.
- (d) There is enough information about the child, the suspect, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

#### 317.4.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating an AMBER Alert:

- (a) Call to notify the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services' State Emergency Communications Center that an AMBER Alert will be requested.
- (b) Complete the AMBER Alert Activation form.
- (c) Fax and email the completed AMBER Alert Activation form to the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services' State Emergency Communications Center.
- (d) Make an NCIC missing person entry using the Child Abduction (CA) flag through the Criminal Justice Information Sharing System (CJIS).

#### 317.4.3 CANCELLATION OF AN AMBER ALERT

It is the responsibility of the incident commander who approved the activation of the Amber Alert, or the Investigations Division Lieutenant or Sergeant, to cancel an Amber Alert when appropriate.

This includes notifying State Radio of the cancellation of an Amber Alert.

### 317.5 BLUE ALERTS

Blue Alerts are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding an individual who has threatened a law enforcement officer with a deadly weapon, used a deadly weapon against a law enforcement officer, caused a law enforcement officer to suffer serious bodily injury or death, abducted a law enforcement officer, or caused a law enforcement officer to go missing while on-duty, and the individual has left the scene of the offense (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-01).

#### 317.5.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria are used to determine if a Blue Alert should be issued (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-04):

- (a) A suspect individual has threatened an officer with a deadly weapon, used a deadly weapon against an officer, caused an officer to suffer serious bodily injury or death, abducted an officer, or caused an officer to go missing while on-duty.
- (b) The suspect has fled the scene and a description of the suspect or the suspect's vehicle is available for broadcast.
- (c) The suspect poses a threat to the public or other law enforcement members.

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- (d) Dissemination of available information to the public may help avert further harm or assist in the apprehension of the suspect.

### 317.5.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating a Blue Alert:

- (a) Call to notify the State Emergency Communications Center that a Blue Alert will be requested.
- (b) Complete the Blue Alert Activation form.
- (c) Fax and email the completed Blue Alert Activation form to the State Emergency Communications Center.

### 317.6 PUBLIC EMERGENCY ALERTING SYSTEMS

The City of Fargo public emergency alerting system consists of the CodeRed Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) system and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The CodeRed systems and EAS may be utilized as a communication tool used to inform citizens of emergency situations which immediately threaten their lives and or property. The system can be used for missing person notification, criminal investigation information, natural disasters, and critical incidents which threaten the public's safety.

Department employees are responsible for providing their up-to-date contact information to the department's CodeRed administrator (Chief's administrative assistant).

#### 317.6.1 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating the CodeRed IPAWS:

- (a) All command officers should be trained on the CodeRed system and able to send out a CodeRed message.
- (b) A CodeRed message can be sent out by a command officer via CodeRed website, through the ECN Launcher "app" on any Android, iOS, or Windows devices, or coordinated through RRRDC.
- (c) Careful consideration should be made when determining which mapping method to use prior to launching a CodeRed message.
  - 1. The size of the selected area may send information to residents outside of the City of Fargo, who aren't affected by the situation.
- (d) Voice and email messages can be as long as needed, but text messages must be limited to 160 characters.
- (e) A CodeRed message should contain the following information:
  - 1. Source - which agency is sending the message
  - 2. Guidance - what actions to take
  - 3. Hazard - what is the situation
  - 4. Location - where is the danger

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5. Termination time - if applicable or known
- (f) If the incident expands or is resolved additional CodeRed messages may be necessary to inform the public.

The following is the procedure for initiating the Emergency Alert System (EAS):

- (a) All EAS messages will be coordinated and activated by RRRDC with the proper authorization from an incident commander or designee (see EAS flow chart and Action Code attachments)
- (b) All EAS messages should be crafted by a Sergeant or above, and all messages must be approved by a command officer prior to release by RRRDC.
- (c) For localized incidents supervisors and incident commanders should consider using the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) feature of the EAS.
- (d) Once a WEA is sent out, it may be followed by an EAS message which provides more specific details if the incident escalates into more areas.
- (e) In order to successfully send a WEA, the alert must contain certain values which reflect an imminent threat.
- (f) EAS/WEA messages must contain five (5) key elements and are limited to 90 characters:
  1. Source - which agency is sending the message
  2. Guidance - what actions to take
  3. Hazard - what is the situation
  4. Location - where is the danger
  5. Termination time - required by Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)
- (g) If the incident expands or is resolved additional EAS messages may be necessary to inform the public.

[See attachment: Public Alert Flow chart.pdf](#)

[See attachment: Action Codes.pdf](#)

### **317.7 SILVER ALERTS**

Silver Alerts are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information to help locate missing disabled or elderly individuals, or individuals who have a developmental disability (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-01).

#### **317.7.1 CRITERIA**

The following criteria are used to determine if a Silver Alert should be issued (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-04):

- (a) A disabled adult or elderly vulnerable adult, or an individual with a developmental disability has been reported missing (N.D.C.C. § 25-01.2-01; N.D.C.C. § 50-25.2-01).
- (b) An elderly adult has been reported missing by a family member or other individual who has significant frequent contact with the elderly adult and sufficient evidence indicates

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that the missing elderly adult is believed to be in grave danger of serious bodily harm or death or the particular circumstances warrant a Silver Alert.

### 317.7.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating a Silver Alert:

- (a) Call to notify the State Emergency Communications Center that a Silver Alert will be requested.
- (b) Complete the Silver Alert Activation form.
- (c) Fax and email the completed Silver Alert Activation form to the State Emergency Communications Center.

### 317.8 MISSING AND ENDANGERED PERSONS ALERTS

Missing and Endangered Persons (MEP) Alerts are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding adults who have been abducted or are believed to be at imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-01).

#### 317.8.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria are used to determine if an MEP Alert should be issued (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-04):

- (a) The missing or abducted person is 18 years of age or older.
- (b) There is confirmation the person is believed to be in grave danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- (c) There is descriptive information about the missing person, the abductor, and/or the suspect's vehicle to assist with the safe recovery of the victim and/or the apprehension of the suspect.
- (d) There is enough information about the victim, the suspect, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

#### 317.8.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating an MEP Alert:

- (a) Call to notify the State Emergency Communications Center that an MEP Alert will be requested.
- (b) Complete the MEP Alert Activation form.
- (c) Fax and email the completed MEP Alert Activation form to the State Emergency Communications Center.

### 317.9 FEATHER ALERTS

Feather Alerts are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding Indigenous individuals who have been abducted or are believed to be at imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-01).

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#### 317.9.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria are used to determine if a Feather Alert should be issued (N.D.C.C. § 54-67-04):

- (a) The missing or abducted individual is Indigenous.
- (b) There is confirmation the person is believed to be in grave danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- (c) There is descriptive information about the missing Indigenous individual, the abductor, and/or the suspect's vehicle to assist with the safe recovery of the victim and/or the apprehension of the suspect.
- (d) There is enough information about the victim, the suspect, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

#### 317.9.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating a Feather Alert:

- (a) Call to notify the State Emergency Communications Center that a Feather Alert will be requested.
- (b) Complete the Feather Alert Activation form.
- (c) Fax and email the completed Feather Alert Activation form to the State Emergency Communications Center.

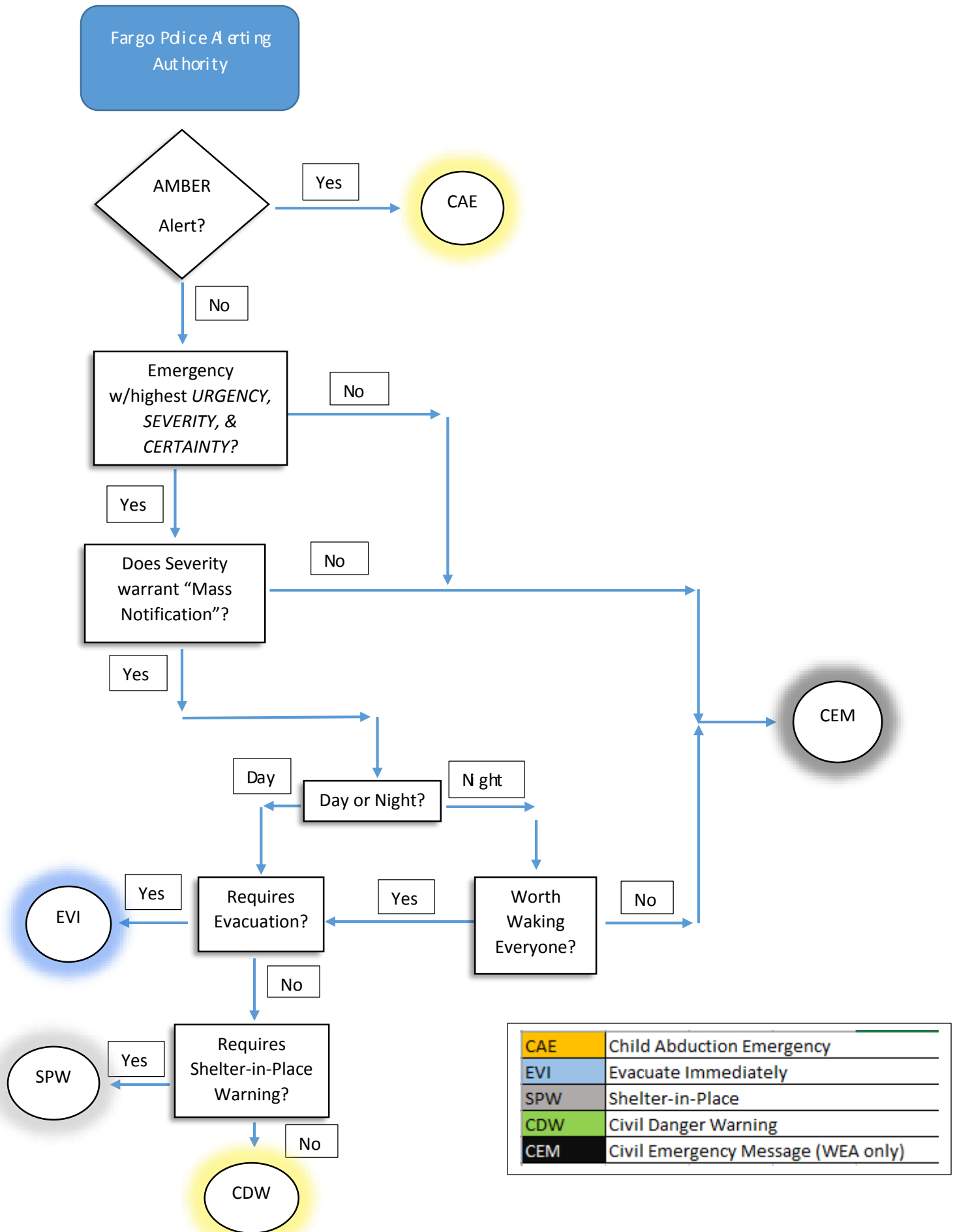
#### **317.10 REVISION DATE 09/19/2025**

## **Attachments**

## **Public Alert Flow chart.pdf**



# Emergency Alerting System (EAS) Flow Chart



## **Action Codes.pdf**

## Criteria for Issuing Warnings

Urgency	Severity	Certainty	= Action Code
Immediate	Extreme	Observed	EVI, SPW, CDW, CEM*
Expected	Severe	Likely	EVI, SPW, CDW, CEM*
Future	Moderate	Possible	Advisory
Past	Minor	Unlikely	Advisory

\* Using a CEM will activate Wireless Emergency Alerts, but not Emergency Alert System

When deciding whether to issue a public warning, the following criteria should be applied:

- Does the hazardous situation require the public to take immediate action?
- Does the hazardous situation pose a serious threat to life and property?
- Is there a high degree of probability that the hazardous situation will occur?
- Are other means of disseminating the information adequate to ensure rapid delivery of urgent information?

Action Codes:

**EVI – Evacuate Immediately** – is where an immediate evacuation is recommended

**CDW – Civil Danger Warning** – is an event which presents a danger to a significant amount of the local population – usually warns of specific hazard and gives specific protective actions

**SPW – Shelter-in-Place Warning** – a warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter-in-place or to take cover from a dangerous situation in their area

**CEM – Civil Emergency Message (WEA only)** – is an emergency message regarding an in progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property

# Criteria for Issuing Warnings

In order to successfully send a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA), the alert must contain certain values for these fields, reflected an “Imminent Threat”. The values marked in red (below) are the ones which will activate a WEA or EAS alert:

## 1) Urgency:

- “**Immediate**” – Responsive action should be taken immediately
- “**Expected**” – Responsive action should be taken soon (within the next hour)
- “Future” – Responsive action should be taken in the near future
- “Past” – Responsive action is no longer required
- “Unknown” – Urgency not known

## 2) Severity:

- “**Extreme**” – Extraordinary threat to life or property
- “**Severe**” – Significant threat to life or property
- “Moderate” – Possible threat to life or property
- “Minor” – Minimal to no known threat to life or property
- “Unknown” – Severity unknown

## 3) Certainty:

- “**Observed**” – Determined to occurred or to be ongoing
- “**Likely**” – Likely 9more than 50% chance)
- “Possible” – Possible but now likely (less than 50% chance)
- “Unlikely” – Not expected to occur
- “Unknown” – Certainty unknown