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 of their availability 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, endangered child, apprehending a dangerous person,general threat to public safety, 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 next person in their chain of command, and the Public Information Officer when any public alert is generated.

The command officer or 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™

The AMBER Alert™ program coordinates the efforts of law enforcement, the media and the public in an effort to safely recover abducted children. In the event of a suspected child abduction, an AMBER Alert should be generated first, and, if the facts warrant, the alert should be expanded beyond the AMBER Alert.

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317.4.1 CRITERIA

An AMBER Alert is warranted when all of the following apply:

(a) The abduction involves a child 17 years of age or younger.

(b) There is confirmation of a stranger or a family abduction in which the child is believed to be in grave danger of serious bodily harm or death, and not considered a runaway.

(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) The officer responding to investigate a possible child abduction/endangerment incident will be responsible for determining if the circumstances are appropriate for activating an Amber Alert. If so, the officer will immediately notify an on-duty Field Services supervisor. The officer will also attempt to obtain a current photograph of the abducted/endangered child, which will be shared with the media.

(b) As soon as it is practical, the investigating officer shall provide the Red River Regional Dispatch Center (RRRDC) with information concerning the abducted/endangered child. The RRRDC will provide neighboring law enforcement agencies with the information, as well as making a regional broadcast (ND, SD, MN) via teletype.

(c) The on-duty supervisor, incident commander, or command officer will complete the AMBER Alert Activation form.

(d) Once the Amber Alert Media Advisory and the State of North Dakota's Request for an Amber Alert form are completed, the on-duty supervisor or command officer will forward them and all other relevant information to the incident commander for review.

(e) The incident commander, or his/her designee, will be responsible for reviewing the investigating officer's report of an abducted/endangered child, and approving the activation of an Amber Alert. If the Amber Alert is approved, the incident commander, or his/her designee, will immediately notify the Field Services Division and Criminal Investigations Division Deputy Chief's of the use of an Amber Alert.

(f) The incident commander, or his/her designee, shall FAX a copy of the Amber Alert Media Advisory form to RRRDC, who in turn will FAX the information to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) designee - the West Fargo Police Department.

(g) The incident commander will contact North Dakota State Radio Communications by telephone at 1-701-328-9921, and request activation of the state's "Amber Alert" plan. The incident commander will fax the completed AMBER Alert Activation form to

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the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services State Radio Communications System.

(h) The incident commander, or designee, will verify by telephone the form was received.

(i) The incident commander, or designee, shall contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-843-5678 to inform them of the incident involving the abducted/endangered child.

(j) RRRDC will make an NCIC missing person entry using the Child Abduction (CA) flag through the Criminal Justice Information Sharing System (CJIS).

(k) The department Public Information Officer (PIO) will as soon as practical, and in conjunction with disseminating an Amber Alert, be responsible for conducting a press conference, where additional information concerning the abducted/endangered child will be released.

See attachment: Amber Alert forms.pdf

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 a violent criminal who has seriously injured, killed or abducted a local, state or federal law enforcement officer.

317.5.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria are utilized to determine if a Blue Alert should be issued (N.D.C.C. § 54-12-32):

(a) A suspect individual has threatened an officer with a deadly weapon, has used a deadly weapon against an officer or has caused an officer to suffer serious bodily injury or death, or the officer has been abducted or is 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.

(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) An officer or supervisor shall initiate a Blue Alert by filling out the Request for Blue Alert form and then FAX it to North Dakota State Radio Communications at 1-701-328-9926.

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(b) The supervisor, command officer, or incident commander will call North Dakota State Radio at 1-701-328-9921 to request a Blue Alert.

(c) Photographs of the officer(s), suspect and/or suspect vehicle can be sent via email to nddes@nd.gov.

(d) The request will be reviewed by the ND BCI. If approved, they will authorize activation of the Blue Alert, and the ND BCI will disseminate the Blue Alert as appropriate. ND State Radio will activate the Blue Alert on law enforcement radio and teletype.

See attachment: request-for-blue-alert.pdf

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
5. Termination time - if applicable or known

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(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:

    (a) Source - which agency is sending the message

    (b) Guidance - what actions to take

    (c) Hazard - what is the situation

    (d) Location - where is the danger

    (e) 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

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Attachments

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Amber Alert forms.pdf

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AMBER ALERT
Media Advisory Form

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING AN ABDUCTED/ENDANGERED CHILD

PLEASE READ IMMEDIATELY

On _____ at _____ am/pm, _____
(Date) **(Time)** **(Child's Name)**

was abducted, or is otherwise endangered. _____
(Child's Name)

is described as a _____ _____ and is _____ years old. He/She has
(Race) **(Sex)** **(Age)**

_____ hair, _____ eyes, and weighs approximately _____ lbs. He/She
(Color) **(Color)**

was last seen wearing _____
(Clothing Description)

and was last seen at _____
(Location)

_____ may be with _____
(Child's Name) **(Suspect's Name)**

who may be driving a _____ _____ _____
(Auto Year) **(Auto Color)** **(Auto Make/Model)**

_____ is described as a _____ _____
(Suspect's Name) **(Race)** **(Sex)**

with _____ hair, _____ eyes, and approximately _____ years of age.
(Color) **(Color)**

Additional Information: _____

_____

_____

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THIS CHILD, PLEASE CONTACT THE FARGO POLICE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY BY CALLING: 701-235-4493 OR 911

Red River Regional Dispatch Center FAX: 298-6910

REQUEST FOR AMBER ALERT
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
SFN 10/02

Date:	Time:	Requesting Law Enforcement Officer/Agency/Phone Number:

VICTIM INFORMATION

Name:		Address:			
DOB:	Sex:	Race:	Height:	Weight:	Eye Color:
Hair Color and Style:					
Identifying Marks:					
Clothing Description:					
Where the Abduction Took Place:					
Where and When the Child Was last Seen:					

SUSPECT INFORMATION

Name:		Address:			
Age	Sex	Race:	Height:	Weight:	Eye Color:
Hair Color and Style:					
Identifying Marks:					
Clothing Description:					
Area Last Observed:					

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Color:	Make:	Model:	License Plate Number/State:	Year:
Body Damage:		Miscellaneous Information:		

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Were there witnesses to the abduction: ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Indicate reason you believe individual to be in danger:	
Is there reason to believe the suspect is a relative or has some other special relationship with the victim: ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Indicate any circumstances you feel are pertinent to the case:	
Phone number for public to call to provide information:	Phone number for the media to call:

CRITERIA

1. The abduction involves a child or children 17 years of age or younger;
2. Confirmation by local law enforcement of a stranger or a family abduction in which the child is believed to be in grave danger of serious bodily harm or death; and,
3. Descriptive information about the child, the abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to assist with the safe recovery of the victim and/or the apprehension of the suspect.
4. Is there enough information about the child, suspect, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help?

INSTRUCTIONS

If the criteria for an AMBER Alert has been met, the law enforcement agency requesting the AMBER Alert should complete this form and fax it to State Radio Communications at 701-328-9926 while at the same time calling State Radio at 701-328-9921 to request the Alert. The request will be reviewed by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. The Highway Patrol will authorize activation of the AMBER Alert and dissemination of alert information to the media. State Radio will activate the AMBER Alert.

request-for-blue-alert.pdf

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Action Codes.pdf

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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 of 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

Public Alert Flow chart.pdf

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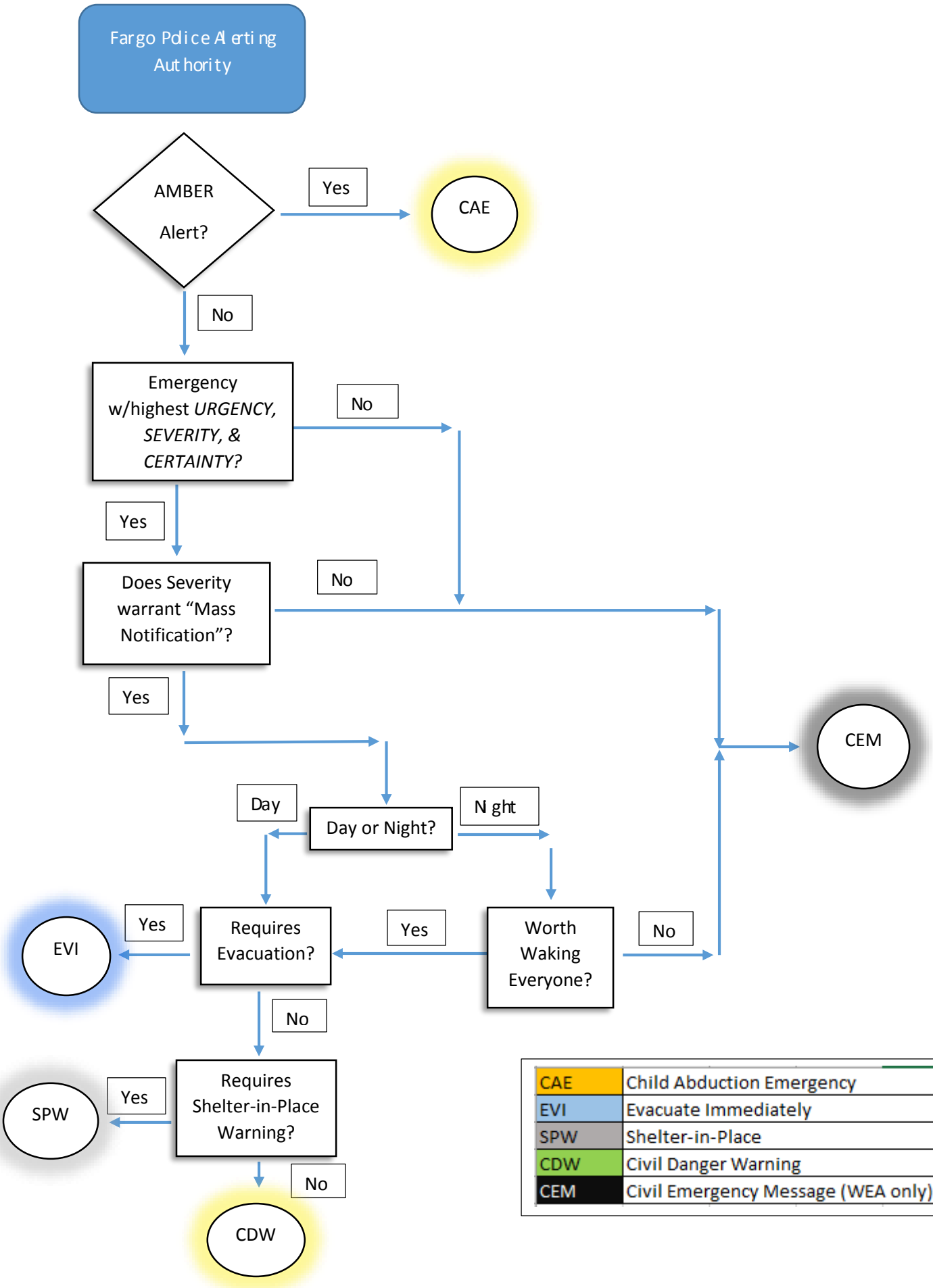
Emergency Alerting System (EAS) Flow Chart



CAE	Child Abduction Emergency
EVI	Evacuate Immediately
SPW	Shelter-in-Place
CDW	Civil Danger Warning
CEM	Civil Emergency Message (WEA only)