

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 Post Victim Image" form. The form is titled "EDIS Post Victim Image" and "Emergency Digital Information Service". It features a sidebar on the left with a yellow background and a red bear logo, containing links like "Post Bulletin", "Post Image", "Suspect", and "Vehicle". The main form area includes fields for "User ID", "Password", "Victim Type", "Victim Name", "Victim Date", "Image File to Post (PNG or Jpeg)", "Victim's Name", "Missing From (City/Town)", "Reason Missing (to (parent)", "Last Seen (Date)", "Agency Case #", "Last Seen (Time - 12 hr)", and "Image Status". There are checkboxes for "Search (Print Available)", "Input (Download)", and "Image Status" (New/Update). A "Browse..." button is next to the "Image File to Post" field. The browser's address bar shows "http://edis.oes.ca.gov/amber/".

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**.

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**. 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 03/03/24, 6'2", red and grey hair, blue eyes. Associated vehicle is blue and white 1982 Dodge Pickup truck, license 6L02295, 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 (satcom)

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



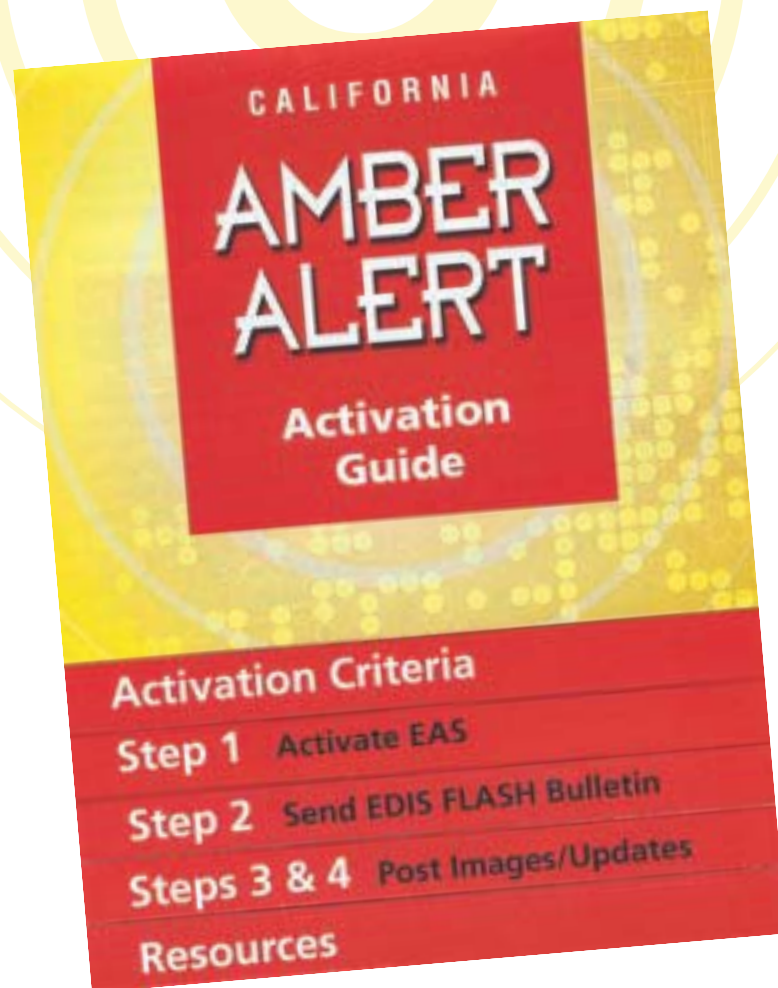
CHP's ENTAC is available to provide assistance in creating and distributing TRAK flyers on missing or abducted children. For assistance, call ENTAC at (916) 657-8287.

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

