



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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March 7, 2011

In Reply Refer To:

1120 (P)
CA-912

EMS TRANSMISSION: 3/7/11
Information Bulletin No. CA-2011-006

To: California State Management Team and Public Affairs Officers

From: Acting State Director, California

Subject: Updated Guidance on Early Alerts

Managing public lands is rapidly becoming a 24-7 operation, especially in California. The news media and web provide 'round the clock' information. Therefore, timely reporting of critical incidents, controversies, and matters likely to draw media, Congressional, and other significant public attention is extremely important.

With new State Management Team members and the need to include employees who act for members of the SMT in absences, it is time to review and update our early alert and management notification procedures.

- **First, timeliness of reporting critical information is vitally important.** Even if all the facts are not known, information about significant incidents must be communicated as soon as possible. While the weekly conference call, for example, is an excellent way to communicate routine business, it is not appropriate to wait until that call to report critical alerts.
- **Second, who to notify depends upon the sensitivity or urgency of the issue, as well as availability.** Field Managers routinely should report to the District Managers, who then report to the State Director and the Deputy State Director External Affairs. This notification does not replace or diminish the law enforcement notification requirement under the BLM Law Enforcement General Order 29 (i.e. Serious Incident Reporting). The DSD External Affairs is responsible for coordinating the Early Alert System (see IM CA-2011-012 attached). If the District Manager cannot be reached, Field Managers should report directly to the State Director and DSD. If they cannot be reached for some reason and the matter warrants immediate attention, call the law enforcement duty officer (available 24-7) at 916-978-4453. He/she will follow existing protocols to make sure the information is transmitted upward in a timely manner.

- **Third, communicating the information is more important than using the proper format.** Getting the information communicated in any way necessary will do. However, the Bureau-wide Early Alert System format is a simple form that includes the office, date, subject, who, where, when, background, and the name of the BLM contact. Preparing your information in this format will help speed it through to its appropriate destination. External Affairs and the District PAOs can assist in drafting EAs, as the DSD External Affairs is responsible for assisting the State Directors in preparing EAs and determining which ones to send on to the Washington Office for the Director and Department.
- **Fourth, having accurate phone numbers is critical.** Currently, the State Director's executive assistants keep track of all office/cell/home numbers for the SMT and other key personnel such as the safety officer, aircraft, and others. It is contingent upon these individuals to keep their numbers up to date both with the State Director's assistants and in Lotus Notes (submit a remedy ticket to Support Services to update your information in Lotus Notes).
- **Fifth, it is each manager's responsibility to brief their designated Acting** in their absence as to these procedures and make sure he/she has the appropriate contact information and understands what to do in the event of an incident.

Finally, please encourage all your employees, and those acting for you, to never hesitate to report important incidents. All of us here in California are part of the Bureau's information network and if you believe the information is important, then report it in a timely manner through the alert protocols described here.

Signed by:
James Wesley Abbott
Acting State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management

Attachment:
BLM-California Policy on Early Alerts (3 pp)