



Orange County Operational Area

Countywide Public Mass Notification System Standard Operating Procedures

Effective: June 30, 2008

Revised: May 24, 2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the Standard Operating Procedures for the use and administration of AlertOC, the Orange County Public Mass Notification System, hereinafter referred to as "System". This document will provide more specific step-by-step procedures and roles and responsibilities at the regional level including describing expectation of participants. Individual jurisdictions/agencies should create and maintain and **regional concepts**. The step-by step procedures for activation and use will be maintained in a separate document maintained by each jurisdiction/agency as a part of their emergency response plans for overall planning and response efforts. A copy of these procedures shall be maintained in PrepareOC.

This document does not supersede any policy and procedures outlines in the Memorandums of Understandings signed by participating agencies, but should be used to support the use of the Orange County Mass Notification System.

II. SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

The primary intent of the Countywide Public Mass Notification System is to disseminate early warning and time sensitive information to county businesses and residents during time of an emergency event. The Public Mass Notification System is only one component of the County of Orange Public Warning System. As deemed fit by local authorities, the System should be used in conjunction with the other public warning mechanisms including, but not limited to, route alerting, the Emergency Alert System, sirens, and press releases.

The Mass Notification System is available 24/7 and has been pre-loaded with Orange County landline phone numbers (including unlisted) and countywide geographic maps. Additionally, citizens have the option to provide additional contact information via self-registration portal www.alertoc.com with link access from county and all participating entity websites. Upon local authority decision to activate, the System will be used to send a message, describing the situation and recommended action the public should take, to affected businesses and households via telephone, e-mail and/or text.

The County of Orange, Orange County Sheriff's Department is the sponsor of the Countywide Public Mass Notification System initiative and will take appropriate measures to ensure that the System is in a state of operational readiness at all times. It is the responsibility of all participating Agencies to maximize citizen benefits from the System.

While the County's intent for implementing and maintaining the System is for "emergency" use, upon consent from local authorities, cities may optionally use the System to disseminate "government-related" non-emergency notifications to citizens and organization resources within its jurisdiction. See Section V. Authorized Use and Section VIII. Cost for policy guidelines relating to non-emergency use.



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III. GOVERNANCE

The Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division will manage the Mass Notification System as a countywide asset under the Policy and Guidance approved and recommended by the Orange County AlertOC Working Group., and agreed upon by each individual Agency when they opt into the system.

Use of the System by each Agency is contingent upon that Agency abiding by the contract with the mass notification vendor, and the protocols established by the Emergency Management Council and Operational Area Executive Board.

The System utilizes the 9-1-1 database to complete the notifications. The use of the 9-1-1 database is regulated by the California Public Utilities Code (CPUC) sections 2872 and 2891.1. The information contained in the 9-1-1 database is confidential and proprietary and shall not be disclosed or utilized except by authorized personnel for the purpose of emergency notifications. Any agency in violation of this regulation is subject to criminal charges as described in the CPUC.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division is responsible to ensure that the provisions of the contract are implemented properly. Authorized users must respect the integrity of the database, understand the privacy issues and fully comply with the policies and protocols outlined in this document. If violations of the MOU and this approved policy document are made by any individual or Agency, the Orange County Sheriff's Department reserves the right to disable that individual's or Agency's login(s).

IV. OVERVIEW OF GENERAL SYSTEM FEATURES

At minimum, the Orange County Sheriff's Department shall acquire and maintain a Public Mass Notification System capable of meeting the following requirements.

- A. Licensed for use throughout the County's entire region
- B. Capacity to send a 45 second message to 10,000 residents and businesses within 10 minutes
- C. Capacity to send messages via phone, e-mail and text
- D. Accessible via the public Internet
- E. Provides audit trail logging and reporting
- F. GIS map interface for geographic call list generation
- G. Citizen self-registration web portal (available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese)
- H. Interactive phone survey technology and reporting
- I. IVR based notification setup and execution
- J. Capable of identifying constituents preferred language and sending message in English, Spanish and Vietnamese



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V. AUTHORIZED USE

The Mass Notification System is designed to be a countywide asset, available to all Agencies that have a dedicated public safety answering point (PSAP) and/or a resident population they are responsible for making protective action recommendations.

An Agency may participate in the countywide System at no charge when used for emergency purposes until June 2021.

Agencies authorized to join the system at no cost are limited to the incorporated cities in the Orange County Operational Area, County agencies and departments, the Municipal Water District of Orange County and Orange County Retail Water Agencies. Each participating Agency must sign a MOU and will maintain, at minimum, a Local Agency Administrator responsible for implementing and administering use of the System at the local level.

Cities

Cities wishing to participate may do so by having an authoritative representative sign the "Orange County Public Mass Notification System" MOU. Upon signing the agreement, the Agency will be provided a local administrator account, a vendor provided user manual and initial training. Throughout the term of the agreement, the Agency may use the System to send an unlimited number of emergency notifications to the public as well as an unlimited number of emergency and non-emergency inter-department messages. Each participating City shall develop and maintain written procedures to identify and address the Agency's specific use of the System within the scope of this policy guide.

County Users

Unincorporated areas of Orange County will have emergency messaging to the public launched by the Orange County Sheriff's Department. All other county agencies may have access to utilize the system for interdepartmental use. Each participating County agency shall develop and maintain written procedures to identify and address the Agency's specific use of the System within the scope of this policy guide and provide this guideline to the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division.

Water Retail Water Agencies

The Municipal Water District of Orange County and Orange County Retail Water Agencies wishing to participate may do so by having an authoritative representative sign the "Orange County Water Retail Agency Public Mass Notification System" MOU. Upon signing the agreement, the Agency will be provided a local administrator account, and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Emergency Management Division in collaboration with the Municipal Water District of Orange County – Water Emergency response Organization of Orange County (WEROC) will provide a user manual and initial training. Throughout the term of the agreement, the Agency may use the System to send emergency notifications to the public by utilizing pre-established GIS shape files or the system's interactive map feature to identify their water users. Each participating agency shall develop and maintain written procedures to identify and address the Agency's specific use of the System within the scope of this policy guide.



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Emergency Use

Use of the Mass Notification System for emergency activity contains two components: (1) the need to disseminate critical, safety-related information to individuals regarding emergency events occurring now, follow up information regarding the event and termination of the emergency event., and (2) communicating with safety-responder staff, volunteers and involved parties about the emergency event.

As a general rule, the System is to be used when the public is being asked to take some action (e.g. evacuate, prepare to evacuate, shelter in place, boil tap water before drinking, local assistance centers and other follow up information, reentry to an areas after evacuation orders have been lifted or termination of the emergency because the danger has passed).

Emergency Public Notifications are limited to:

1. Imminent or perceived threat to life or property
2. Disaster notifications
3. Evacuation notices
4. Public health emergencies
5. Public safety emergencies
6. Any notification to provide emergency information to a defined community

The following criteria should be utilized to assist with determining the need to issue an alert:

1. Severity. Is there a significant threat to public life and safety?
2. Public Protection. Is there a need for members of the public to take a protective action in order to reduce loss of life or substantial loss of property?
3. Warning. Will providing warning information assist members of the public in making the decision to take proper and prudent action?
4. Timing. Does the situation require immediate public knowledge in order to avoid adverse impact?
5. Geographical area. Is the situation limited to a defined geographical area? Is that area of a size that will allow for an effective use of the system, given the outgoing call capacity?
6. Are other means of disseminating the information inadequate to ensure proper and time delivery of the information?
7. Is the message being sent follow up information to an emergency event in progress?

If the answer to ALL of these questions is "Yes", then an activation of the Mass Notification System for emergency purposes may be warranted.

To assist with trigger points for potential message use topics refer to Attachment A

Emergency Responder Notifications are limited to:

1. Contacting first responders to advise of an emergency
2. Contacting first responders to report for duty due to an emergency
3. Contacting key staff regarding an emergency or crisis situation



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4. Contacting agency employees/DSWs to report at a different time or location (or provide an update) due to an emergency
5. Exercises

Emergency considerations:

1. Notification shall clearly state situation is an emergency
2. Message length shall not exceed 60 seconds
3. It is highly recommended all messages are recorded using a real voice and not the computer transcriber.
4. It is highly recommended to provide a phone number or website where the public can obtain additional or updated information
5. An all clear notification should be sent when applicable

A. Inter-Department Communication

City and County Agencies may use the Mass Notification System for non-emergency inter-departmental business communication as needed, without cost. It is recommended that individual Agencies identify where this would add value to their operations and establish separate written protocols and procedures for this use.

B. Non-Emergency Public Use

No agency shall use the Mass Notification System for non-emergency public announcements unless a separate contract with the vendor is established. Non-emergency use shall be consistent and in compliance with the non-emergency guidelines included within. Any agency in violation of this term may have their use of the system suspended. Additionally, E 911 data is not allowed to be utilized for non emergency use according to the law California Public Utilities Code (CPUC) sections 2872 and 2891.1 and violators may be subject to criminal enforcement. Jurisdictions will be limited to utilizing the self-registering portal entry data only when launching non-emergency messages.

Agencies who contract to use the countywide System for non-emergency activity agree to give precedence to emergency notification call-outs by delaying or terminating non-emergency notification sessions if needed to increase emergency message success. The primary concern for point of failure in this situation is not the Mass Notification System, but the telephone port capacity of local phone providers responsible for delivering calls to residents. Cost associated with non-emergency public notifications is the responsibility of the local Agency, See section VIII.

Non-emergency **public** notification use is **prohibited** for any of the following purposes:

1. Any message of commercial nature
2. Any message of a political nature
3. Any non-official business (e.g. articles, retirement announcements, etc.)
4. To send a message to an E911 obtained data source; see Section III, Governance, for additional information relating to E911 data use restrictions



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C. Confidentiality

Agencies shall be responsible for: (i) ensuring that users maintain the confidentiality of all user login and password information; (ii) ensuring that users use the service in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, including those relating to use of personal information; (iii) any breach of the terms of this policy or the vendor agreement by any user; and (iv) all communications by users using the service. Agencies shall promptly notify the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the vendor if it becomes aware of any user action or omission that would constitute a breach or violation of this policy or the vendor agreement.

Through the "Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Orange and Participants for use of Countywide Mass Notification System," each agency is bound in writing to the confidentiality obligations sufficient to permit agencies to fully perform its obligations under this policy or the vendor agreement.

VI. AUTHORIZED SYSTEM USERS

A. Public Notifications

In general, use of the system in most cities is the responsibility of the local law enforcement agency. Since law is responsible to make alert, notification and evacuation orders. However, others may also be authorized to make notifications will be officials including , emergency management, fire and city manager departments.

County Administrator: The Orange County Sheriff's Department will act as the Countywide Public Mass Notification System County Administrator. County Administrator responsibilities are covered in section IX. System Administration and Operation.

County User: Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Communication Division (9-1-1 dispatch), Control One and Emergency Management Division personnel will be setup as "County" users. County Users will have permission to access and launch emergency notifications to all jurisdictions within Orange County consistent with County Operational Area public safety response guidelines. All other county agencies will have permission to execute inter department notifications.

The Orange County Emergency Operations Center, when activated will be responsible for all public notifications to unincorporated areas during an emergency. For day to day use of the system for public safety incidents including but not limited to hazmats, felony crimes with suspects still at large, the Orange County Sheriff's Department Commander will be responsible for execution of messages.

Local Agency Administrator: A minimum of one designated Local Agency Administrator will be required for each Agency participating in the countywide System. Local Agency Administrator responsibilities are covered in section IX. System Administration and Operation.

Local Agency User: Participating Agencies may have an unlimited number of Local Agency Users. Local Agency Users will have access to resident contact records within their jurisdiction as well as neighboring jurisdictions with an established MOU agreement. Local



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Agency Users will be authorized and managed by the Local Agency Administrator and may have varied system permissions.

Any City jurisdiction who has contracted police services shall grant and provide access to their jurisdictions system in order to launch messages in a timely manner.

- Water agencies are identified as local users under the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division.

Inter-Department User: Inter-departmental users will have permission to inter-departmental contact information only and are authorized to use the system solely for inter-departmental communication including but limited to first responder or volunteer call-outs. Additional user for special contact groups including In House Special Services (IHSS), access and functional need cliental may be established with prior authorization from the Orange County Sheriff's Department to ensure no vendor contract violations are occurring.

VII. ACTIVATION OF THE SYSTEM

Each City Jurisdiction is responsible for launching messages to affected citizens and businesses within their jurisdiction. Determination of authority to request activation of the Mass Notification System rest with local officials, not with the County of Orange or the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division. Water agencies are responsible for launching messages to affected citizens and businesses as identified in their service district. The following is protocol to be followed when an emergency message is launched anywhere in Orange County.

A. Public Notifications

1. The County of Orange is authorized to use the System to send notifications of regional emergencies to any and all residents within the Operational Area (example: Countywide quarantine order for a health alert). Upon sending a countywide notification, Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division will, as soon as possible, advise the appropriate local Agency that mass notifications have been sent by the County to residents of their cities. Pre-notification to emergency managers by email or WebEOC of this AlertOC activation before actual delivery of the message will occur if possible.
2. Other than regional emergency notifications, public notifications are the responsibility of the individual City/Local Government. In the event that the geographical location of an incident requires a message to be delivered to multiple jurisdictions, the responsible Agency will inform each individual Agency so that they can send the message to those affected within their own jurisdiction. Exception: Small unincorporated neighborhoods embedded within City limits will receive mass notification of local city emergency activity from City Officials. This does not include the unincorporated areas of Rossmoor, Midway City, Cowan Heights, Lemon Heights, all canyons, Coto de Caza and Trabuco Canyon areas. Any of the fore mentioned unincorporated areas by names, coordination will have to occur with the Orange County Sheriff's Department/Watch Commander when the EOC is not activated.
3. For a City wishing to send or receive messages to or from a neighboring Agency during time of a multi-jurisdictional incident, an MOU should be established between both parties that grants permission for the handling Agency to send emergency notification to residents



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within the affected Agency. (Exception will be made for cities who have contracted law enforcement services. No MOU will be required and access SHALL be granted).

- a. In the event no MOU has been established, the local city agency will contact the Police Watch Commander who is the 24 hour warning point for all cities for approval and coordination.
4. Water agencies sending information to the public will do so only to pre-loaded GIS shape files containing their service areas. This procedure must occur due to the overlapping jurisdictional boundary areas. Water agencies will launch messages under the Orange County user account. Pre-notification to the Water Emergency Response of Orange County (WEROC) emergency manager, and impacted city emergency managers will occur prior to the launch of the message by email containing the AlertOC message before actual delivery of the message will occur.
 - a. The WEROC Emergency Manager is responsible to notify and provide the information to the OA/County Emergency Manager since the identification information will show the County of Orange as the initiator.
5. In the event a participating Agency is unable to send out an **emergency** message, the Orange County Control One Coordinated Communications Center is available to act on the local Agency's behalf. Agencies that do not have a current MOU with the County may also request Control One to send out an emergency message. Control One will not be available to send internal notifications. All rules and guidelines are applicable. It is still the responsibility of the local agency with the primary responsibility of the incident to receive approval for adjacent jurisdictions on multi jurisdictional events. Attachment B is the launch form containing all information required in order to launch a message. Authority to request mutual aid assistance from Control One must be requested by a Lieutenant or above (same protocols as requesting a Code Alex).
6. If the Operational Area EOC is activated, agencies may request to utilize the Orange County Information Hotline 714-628-7085 as the identification phone number for residents and businesses to call to obtain additional information. Agencies are requested to send a copy of the AlertOC script to the OA EOC before the message is launched, if possible.
7. Participating Agencies are authorized to develop pre-established notification lists and messages to meet their individual needs. These lists may include special populations (e.g. in-home care, schools, etc) or those susceptible to certain risks (e.g. homes within dam inundation zone). It is the responsibility of the participating Agency to create, maintain and update these lists.

B. Emergency Response and Inter-Department Notifications:

1. Each participating Agency is authorized to create employee/volunteer and department call lists and pre-recorded messages.
2. Any non-city agency wishing to create specialty groups which still contain public contact information (ex: special needs callouts) may do so with prior consent. However, any activation of information to any of these groups needs to be coordinated to ensure clear, concise and accurate information is being dispersed. During emergencies, messages will be coordinated with the Operational Area, Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division.
3. It is the sole responsibility of each participating Agency to maintain these lists and to launch notifications as deemed necessary.



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VIII. COSTS

The County of Orange agrees to fund the System for notifications classified as “emergency use”. The County of Orange also agrees to continue to purchase updated E911 telephone data and geographic maps.

Costs associated with use of the System for non-emergency activity is the responsibility of the local Agency through separate contract with the mass notification Vendor.

IX. SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION/OPERATIONS

Individual Agencies are responsible for providing logins and procedural training to key individuals within their Agency responsible for using the Mass Notification System.

A. County Administrator

The Orange County Sheriff’s Department will assign and maintain a designated Mass Notification Program Administrator responsible for overall acquisition, accessibility, maintenance, compliance and management of all components required to provide an effective countywide mass notification system.

The County Administrator is responsible for:

1. System acquisition and contract management.
2. Policy management and as needed modification (in consultation with public safety, emergency management and emergency response personnel.)
3. Audit compliance: routine monitoring of System use to insure policy and contract compliance.
4. Access management: record management of signed MOU from each participating Agency, distribution of local administrator accounts and updated local administrator contact list.
5. Data management: E911 data acquisition, update and compliance monitoring. Countywide map file acquisition, update and overall geo-coding.
6. Testing: facilitate routine System-wide test exercise, document overall test results and recommend and execute, as needed, corrective action at the County level.
7. Public education campaign: initiate and facilitate public education campaign aimed at making the public aware of the countywide public mass notification system initiative and citizen web portal.
8. System support: provide support to Local Agency Administrators.

B. Local Agency Administrator

Participating Agencies agree to appoint a designated Mass Notification Local Administrator responsible for leading, coordinating, monitoring and optimizing use of the Mass Notification System at the local level. Local Agency Administrator shall act as the Agency’s central point of contact and will work collaboratively with the County Administrator to insure local use of the system is within policy and MOU guidelines.

Local Agency Administrator is responsible for:



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1. Contract acquisition if Agency will use the system for non-emergency purposes.
2. Local Agency Mass Notification Operating Procedure development and management.
3. Use compliance: routine monitoring to ensure System is used within the conditions and terms of this document and associated MOU.
4. Access management: local user account distribution and management, record management of MOU(s) and signed end user P&P.
5. Data management: perform routine data management, error-correcting and data integrity updates to System contact and geo-coded map data.
6. Testing: facilitate routine local System test exercise, document local test results and recommend and execute, as needed, corrective action at the local level.
7. Public education campaign: initiate and facilitate public education campaign aimed at making the local community aware of the intended use of the Mass Notification System and citizen web portal.
8. System support: provide support to local Agency end-users.

X. INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

The Orange County Sheriff's Department will acquire and maintain 24x7x365 vendor support for the Mass Notification System. Participating Agencies are authorized to contact vendor support as needed.

XI. ROUTINE TESTING

The Mass Notification System will be tested quarterly. Test exercises will be geared towards insuring that use of the System in an emergency is optimized. This includes testing operational readiness, activation procedures and system effectiveness as well as validating data and system processes. Through test exercises, System administrators and users will be able to observe the mode of operation to augment and refresh System and process knowledge.

Specific test exercise routines, roles, responsibilities and schedule will be detailed in the Operational Area Standard Operating Procedure document.

By signing the Mass Notification System MOU, participating Agencies agree to take part in quarterly Mass Notification countywide test exercises.

XII. DEFINITIONS

1. **System** – All components of the Mass Notification System including hardware, software, access portals, contact data and GIS maps.
2. **Resident** – Comprises households and businesses.
3. **IVR** – Interactive Voice Response is a phone technology that allows a computer to detect voice and touch tones using a normal phone call. This technology will allow a user of the Mass Notification System to launch a message to a pre-defined call list when a pc or internet connection is not available.



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4. **Emergency** - "Emergency" shall include, but not be limited to, instances of fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riots, or disease that threaten the safety and welfare of the citizens and property located within the boundaries of the county and participants' respective jurisdictions.



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Revision History:

<i>Revision Date</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Description</i>
April 18, 2008	PMNS Policy Committee	Document originated
May 19, 2008	PMNS Executive Review Team	Non-emergency session termination in Section V., Item C.
June 16, 2008	Teara LeBlanc	Exception clause in Section VII, Item A., bullet 2.
May 2010	Vicki Osborn	Revision of all sections
June 2012	Raymond Cheung	Revision for OCSD transition
May 2013	Raymond Cheung	Revision for new vendor contract
May 2016	Raymond Cheung	Added confidentiality item to Section V., Item C. and allowed non-emergency use in Section V., Item B. and Section VIII.



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Attachment A – Alert OC Trigger Points Guidelines (*Placeholder*)

Type of Incident	Description	Meets Public Safety Criteria
Active Shooter	A shooting with armed individual or individuals is occurring in a known area.	Yes
Boil Water Orders	An unsafe water supply issue requiring the public to boil water before use.	Yes
Building Fire	A fire occurring in an urban area requiring evacuation or shelter in place for the immediate area.	Yes
Violent Crimes	Violent crimes that just occurred such as robbery, assault, murder, etc.	Yes
Felony Suspect at Large	Law enforcement is currently searching for a felony suspect that is suspected to be in a certain area.	Yes
HazMat	Hazardous Materials incidents that require a fire/hazmat response and may include evacuations or shelter-in-place orders.	Yes
Health Orders	Any public health order made pursuant to County Health Officer recommendations.	Yes
Missing Adult (920A) with special circs	12- 17 yrs with decreased mental capacity or medical condition	Yes
Missing Child (920C)	12 yrs or younger ***Discussion add Amber alert triggers	Yes
Missing Juvi (920J)with special circs	18 yrs and older 12- 17 yrs with decreased mental capacity or medical condition	Yes
Severe Weather Related	Weather warnings that forecast an occurring or imminent threat to public safety or coincide with protective action recommendations such as voluntary or mandatory evacuation orders.	Yes
Evacuation or Shelter-in-Place	Voluntary or mandatory evacuation or shelter-in-place orders.	Yes
Wildland Fire	A fire occurring in a wildland urban interface area requiring immediate evacuation or shelter-in-place.	Yes
Road Closures	Unplanned road closures due to an emergency situation.	Yes
Planned Events	Road closures due to community events planned in advance.	No



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AlertOC Activation Form (for emergency use only)
 (Attachment B)

Request Received	
Date/Time:	
By: (Name/Title)	

Jurisdiction Information		
Jurisdiction Name:		
Requestor: (Name/Title)		
Contact Phone Numbers:	#1:	#2:
Authorizing Official: (Name/Title)		

Message Specifics
Date/Time Message to Be Sent: <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately
Targeted Recipients:
Type of Message: <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> e-mail <input type="checkbox"/> SMS
SMS Content:
Message Content:

Staff Executing Message	
Initiator Name (printed):	
Authorizing Sheriff Official:	
Date and Time Sent:	
Name, Date and Time Results provided to jurisdiction	