

LWC Safety Committee Minutes for 11-July-2026

(Note: This is the revised Otter AI version of the minutes based on its "Summary". Any additional information or clarifications that were not part of the meeting but added by the recorder are indicated with red italics.)

Called to Order: 0930 PDT

Attendees: Vicki Berchou, Les Blumenthal, Anne Bradley (Chair), Patricia Koonce, Molly Dumas (BoD Liaison), Chuck Duncan, Chris Lodge, Cheryl Meece, Shirley Pease, Michael Tomlinson (*recorder*)

Summary

The meeting discussed the successful radio poll with 13 out of 20 Safety Captains participating, including four board members and three other residents. The group reviewed the May 5 meeting minutes and the May 7 ICS training exercise, noting improvements needed for future training. The August 12 training exercise will focus on using the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) form, with a PowerPoint presentation planned. The group also addressed the need for better communication during emergencies, including the use of radios and alternative alerts like sirens or car horns. The next radio poll is scheduled for September 5.

Action Items

- [X] Michael Tomlinson - Distribute printed, address-labeled Rapid Needs Assessment forms to every Safety Captain in advance of the August 12 ICS field exercise so they can practice using them.
- [X] Michael Tomlinson - Draft a simple written plan describing the proposed audible alert system (for example, three car-horn blasts or similar) to trigger Safety Captains and residents to turn on their radios and begin communication during emergencies, and circulate it for review by the group. *The DRAFT protocol is included in the appendix to these minutes. The results of MT's original ChatGPT query is 39 pages and is included on the LWC Emergency Preparedness webpage.*
- [X] Michael Tomlinson - Double-check that the international distress signal uses three short horn blasts. *Yes, 3 short blasts are internationally recognized as a distress signal.*
- [X] Upload Mike Tomlinson's new Rapid Needs Assessment PowerPoint presentation to the Safety Captains website so members can review it before the August 12 training exercise.

- [X] Confirm with Dena and Michelle that August 12 is available for the Safety Captain ICS/RNA training and field exercise, and then notify all Safety Captains of the confirmed date and time.
- [] Prepare and share a concise after-action summary explaining how the recent missing-child alert was sent out and how different Safety Captains and residents learned about it, for use in future safety communications training.
- [X] Investigate why no Amber or Silver alerts were received locally for the recent missing-child case and report back to the group on how the county's alert system operates.

Outline

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes and Radio Poll

- Anne Bradley presented Bill Albright's report on the successful radio poll held during the July 4th holiday. We had participation from 13 of 20 Safety Captains (65%); 4 of 5 Board members (80%); 1 staff member; 3 other LWC residents/guests; and 1 Depoe Bay resident (Michael Dane). For the 8:45 am ICS poll on Channel 17, we had participation from 8 of the 12 ICS team leads (67%). Bill also sent out (unannounced) a Meshtastic text to the 6 ICS members who have Meshtastic devices, but only got a response from 1 (Michael Tomlinson). Bill suggested we make this part of our monthly polling routine.
- Anne Bradley asked for any thoughts on the radio poll, with Chuck Duncan and others expressing no immediate feedback.
- Anne Bradley moved to adopt the May 5 meeting minutes, which was seconded by Chuck Duncan.
- Discussion on the May 7 ICS training exercise, with Patricia Koonce and Mike Tomlinson providing feedback on the exercise's clarity and effectiveness.

Safety Captain Group Text List and Incident with a Child

- Anne Bradley discussed the Safety Captain cellular group text list, noting its varying success and the importance of having it set up.
- Molly Dumas raised concerns about the incident with a missing child, emphasizing the need for immediate contact with 911 and Amber and Silver Alert activation. *MT queried ChatGPT regarding Amber and Silver Alerts. The results (appendix to the minutes) suggest that Amber and Silver Alerts will not work. For example, Amber alerts are only initiated when a kidnapping is suspected. Certainly, a 911 call will initiate a search by SAR groups and LCSO, but it does*

not appear like we will be notified on our cell phones and, of course, all of this is moot if cellular is down.

- Anne Bradley and Molly Dumas discussed the importance of community members knowing to contact **911** first in such situations.
- The group reflected on the community's quick response and the role of Safety Captains in mobilizing residents.

August 12 ICS Training Exercise and Rapid Needs Assessment Form

- Anne Bradley outlined the scenario for the August 12 ICS training exercise, focusing on fire danger and Safety Captains' visibility in the community.
- Mike Tomlinson explained his new PowerPoint presentation for the Rapid Needs Assessment form, aiming to improve clarity and engagement. Saved as a PDF and uploaded to the Emergency Preparedness webpage, it will be available for anyone to review at their own speed.
- Mike Tomlinson stated he plans to distribute paper copies of the form to Safety Captains and use a hypothetical scenario for the exercise.
- The group discussed the importance of face-to-face interaction during the training session to address any questions and confusions.

Communication and Alert Systems

- Mike Tomlinson suggested the need for an alternative alert system in case the group text message fails, such as a siren or car horn.
- Chuck Duncan and Vicki Berchou support the idea of an audible alarm to ensure Safety Captains and residents are aware of urgent situations. Vicki stated she carries a portable air horn, primarily for protection from dangerous wildlife (e.g., cougars) but pointed out it could be used to alert people to turn on their radios. *MT conducted another ChatGPT query regarding horns. The results of this 39-page query suggested that an air horn sounding from the open window leading up to the Com Center in a series of 3 short blasts each to the north, west, and south (the east is blocked by the building), augmented with perhaps 4-5 Safety Captains armed with portable air horns, might alert most of the LWC residents to turn on their radios to Channel 15 to listen to transmissions from our CRS.*
- The group discusses the importance of having a reliable communication system and the potential use of drones for search and rescue. MT reminded people that drones might work along the coastal cliffs (weather permitting) but trees obscure much of LWC. *For those of you that are interested in example drone imagery, the*

very back of these minutes include examples taken with an Antigravity A1 360 (spherical imagery) drone.

- Molly Dumas highlights the challenges of communication during the missing child incident, emphasizing the need for better radio transmission and incident command activation.

Final Announcements and Next Steps

- Anne Bradley announced the next radio poll scheduled for September 5, despite it being a holiday weekend.
- Patricia Koonce asked for clarification on the timing of the PowerPoint presentation for the August 12 training exercise, with Mike Tomlinson confirming it will be held the week before.
- The group discussed the importance of practicing and refining their response procedures to ensure readiness for future incidents.
- Anne Bradley thanked everyone for their participation and support, concluding the meeting.

Adjourned: 1019 PDT

Appendices follow:

LWC Emergency Notification System (ENS) Protocol

(Draft 1, 2026-07-26)

Preamble – This protocol discusses the procedures for notifying the entire LWC community (with or without cellular and internet service) of an emergency situation of which the residents may not know exists and yet may affect the entire community. This protocol excludes incidents such as a major Cascadia earthquake that would be evident by violent shaking. It does cover incidents that can include but are not limited to:

- Lost child
- Lost cognitively impaired person
- Dangerous wildlife (e.g., cougar)
- Loose pet acting aggressively or erratically
- Person wandering LWC armed or acting erratically
- Gas leak
- House fire
- Major LWC road blocked or damaged
- Dangerous chemical spill on Highway 101
- Approaching storm and possible electrical outage
- Approaching wildfire or poor air quality from wildfire
- Distant tsunami (no operational sirens)

Information regarding incidents that may not or do not affect all of LWC (e.g., partial power or water outage or problem), ideally should be disseminated by Safety Captains, and not necessarily LWC-wide.

Protocol

1. If you, as an individual, come upon an incident such as those described in the list above and:
 - a. you have a cell phone and cell service:
 - i. **call 911** and
 - ii. **text** the four individuals on your LWC Emergency Notification System (ENS Contacts) card; or
 - b. you do **not** have a cell phone or cell service:
 - i. you or your designate either:
 - a. physically go to one of the four ENS Contacts; or
 - b. go to the Rec Center, remove the air horn stored outside, don the hearing protection, and direct the horn at arm's length to the north, west, and south and sound the horn **3 times** in each direction (i.e., a total of 9 blasts of the horn)

2. At least one of the four ENS contacts will come to the Rec Center, question you about the incident, and then occupy the Com Center (Crow's Nest).
3. The ENS contact will turn on the LWC CRS Com Center's radio and will quickly listen for any radio traffic related to the incident.
4. If little or no radio traffic is heard relative to the incident, the ENS Contact will descend halfway down the Crow's Nest stairs with the electronic air horn, open the window, don hearing protection, and direct the horn at arm's length to the north, west, and south and sound the horn **3 times** in each direction (i.e., a total of 9 blasts of the horn).
5. Ideally, the residents who hear the horn blasts will turn on their CRS radios to GMRS/FRS Channel 15. The ENS Contact, now Net Control, will then begin transmitting relevant information over the radio and then quickly conduct a poll by Safety Area to determine who has heard the transmission.
6. If Net Control realizes that the horn was not heard at the distant locations within LWC (likely, particularly for those indoors), Net Control will direct Safety Captains with air horns to step outside, don hearing protection, and direct the horn at arm's length to the north, west, and south and sound the horn **3 times** in each direction (i.e., a total of 9 blasts of the horn).
7. Net Control will then conduct a quick poll by Safety Area again to determine the extent of coverage, and transmit the latest information. Presumably, at that time, the LWC Incident Commander will inform Net Control that they will, or will not, activate the ICS depending on the type of incident.
8. If there is no cellular or internet service, Net Control, at the request of the Incident Commander and depending on the type of incident, will attempt to notify the Depoe Bay Emergency Operations Center (EOC) via radio.
9. Once the incident is resolved, Net Control will inform those on the radio, clear GMRS/FRS Channel 15, shut down the CRS, and begin drafting a brief After Action Report (AAR).

Notes:

- The ENS card is a business card with the ENS Contact Names and Cell Phone numbers on one side, and some brief instructions on the reverse side of the card. It will be given to each resident to keep with them at all times. This card will have a URL or QR code that provides a link to the final ENS Protocol.
- The ENS Contacts are full-time residents of LWC, who have agreed to serve. They must have cell phones, GMRS licenses, a key for the Com Center, and have been trained on the Com Center's GMRS radio. It is understood that, even "full-time" residents are not always present but, perhaps with four individuals, one will be available to operate the CRS.

- The Com Center will be equipped with the WoodsCan Hornet Sport 121-dB Rechargeable Electric Air Horn® or equivalent, foam ear plugs, and a set of ear muffs for hearing protection.
- Four or five Safety Captains located at mid-points north, west, and south of the Rec Center (Safety Area 10) will be equipped with a Falcon Sound Alert FSA6 6-oz. Sound Alert Signal Horn® or equivalent, in the event that the Com Center's air horn is not heard inside the homes of people living near the outer edges of LWC (see below).
- Once we receive the Com Center air horn and with the permission of Depoe Bay, a test will be conducted whereby the horn will be sounded **3 times** in each direction (i.e., a total of 9 blasts of the horn), while a person with a sound meter measures the sound levels near the extreme limits of LWC. While it is possible that this horn alone will be sufficient, it is unlikely, hence the intermediate horns operated by the Safety Captains.
- An email will need to be sent to all residents explaining that the purpose of this horn is to alert them to turn on their radios to GMRS/FRS Channel 15 and to await further instructions.
- The ENS cards will need to be created, printed, and sent to the Safety Captains for distribution to the residents. A second email will be sent out to all residents informing them that, if they did not receive an ENS card, they need to stop by the Gatehouse and pick one up. This email also should remind them that, if they hear the horn blasts, they need to turn on their radios to GMRS/FRS Channel 15.
- At a later date, and if we can establish a reliable Meshtastic node net throughout LWC, we might encourage those that are interested, to purchase and carry with them a SenseCAP Card Tracker T1000-E for Meshtastic®, but this alternative is going to require further investigation. It is conceivable that this could become the primary ENS method, but only with a lot of work and people willing to spend \$50 and, arguably more importantly, the time to keep these devices charged and on at all times and carry them throughout LWC. Also, **permanent** nodes would need to be established throughout LWC that are continuously powered and have backup power (power bank). Moreover, people would need to participate in monthly Meshtastic polls.
- Finally, if there is cellular service, internet service, or the Meshtastic network, the horn(s) may not be necessary. It may be sufficient to alert people via email, again, depending on the incident. For example, for a distant tsunami or a major storm with 5 to 6 hours lead time, email may be sufficient; however, for a lost child wandering LWC between the sea cliffs and a busy highway, immediate notification is imperative.

Amber & Silver Alert Query Results (ChatGPT, 2026-07-14)

On a slightly different but related theme, what can you tell me about Amber Alerts and Silver Alerts? Are they nationwide? Can any county initiate an alert. If a child is missing (i.e., not necessarily kidnapped), can you all 911 and an Amber Alert is issued? What about seniors or any age for that matter, with cognitive impairment, will 911 initiate some kind of alert that is received on all cell phones?

Calling 911 starts a missing-person response, but it does not automatically produce an AMBER Alert, Silver Alert, or cell-phone broadcast. Law enforcement decides what alerting tools are justified under the applicable criteria.

AMBER Alerts

AMBER is a **nationwide network of state, territorial, Tribal, and regional plans**, but it is not one centrally issued federal alert system. Each participating jurisdiction has an authorized AMBER coordinator and written activation criteria. The U.S. Department of Justice provides recommended national criteria, while individual plans may differ slightly.

In Oregon, an AMBER Alert generally requires all of the following:

- law enforcement confirms that a child was abducted;
- the child is 17 or younger;
- the child is believed to be in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death;
- enough descriptive information exists for a public alert to help locate the child, suspect, or vehicle.

A child who is simply missing

A missing child does **not necessarily qualify** for an AMBER Alert.

Examples that may not qualify include:

- a child who wandered away;
- a runaway;

- a teenager whose whereabouts are unknown but who is not believed abducted;
- a custody dispute without evidence of imminent danger;
- a child lost in a park or forest.

You should still call 911 immediately when the circumstances are urgent. There is no need to wait 24 hours. Police can begin searching, enter the child into law-enforcement databases, notify nearby agencies, request Search and Rescue, use social media and news releases, and employ other alert systems even when AMBER criteria are not met. An AMBER Alert is only one tool and is deliberately reserved for the highest-risk abductions.

Can any county initiate one?

A county sheriff's office or city police department can investigate an apparent abduction and **request activation**, but an individual dispatcher, private citizen, HOA, or county official cannot independently send an AMBER Alert.

In Oregon, the investigating law-enforcement agency submits the case through the established Oregon AMBER process, and Oregon State Police determines whether the mandatory criteria are met and coordinates dissemination.

Silver Alerts

"Silver Alert" is not a completely uniform nationwide program. It is a general name used by many states for alerts concerning missing older adults, often involving:

- Alzheimer's disease;
- another form of dementia;
- developmental disability;
- brain injury;
- another cognitive or medical impairment that places the person at serious risk.

Criteria, minimum ages, names, and dissemination methods vary substantially. Some states call them Silver Alerts; others use names such as Endangered Missing Person Alert, Purple Alert, Golden Alert, or Ashanti Alert.

A person therefore does **not** receive exactly the same alert response in every state.

Oregon's situation

Oregon has a Missing Children/Adults Clearinghouse and established procedures for missing vulnerable adults, but Oregon's public-facing system has not historically operated as a single, automatically triggered statewide "Silver Alert" program identical to AMBER.

For a missing older adult believed to be at risk, Oregon emergency-management guidance says to **call 911 immediately**. There is no waiting period. The responding law-enforcement agency begins the investigation and enters the missing person into state and federal databases.

Depending on the circumstances, authorities may use:

- county Search and Rescue;
- neighboring police and sheriff's offices;
- Oregon State Police resources;
- media releases and social media;
- local emergency-notification systems;
- highway variable-message signs, particularly when the person is believed to be driving;
- reverse-911 or county opt-in alert systems;
- Emergency Alert System or Wireless Emergency Alert capabilities when authorized and justified.

Oregon Department of Transportation guidance permits highway signs for a verified missing vulnerable adult request from law enforcement, especially

when the person is driving and has dementia, intellectual or developmental disability, or brain injury.

Does cognitive impairment have to involve a senior?

No. The safety issue is generally **vulnerability and danger**, not age alone.

A missing person of any age might warrant an endangered-person response when the person has:

- dementia or another cognitive disorder;
- autism or an intellectual/developmental disability;
- traumatic brain injury;
- severe psychiatric disorientation;
- an urgent need for medication;
- inability to communicate;
- exposure risk, inadequate clothing, or dangerous weather;
- suicidal statements or other evidence of immediate danger.

The precise public-alert criteria depend on the jurisdiction and available alert category. A 40-year-old with severe cognitive impairment may present a more urgent endangered-person case than an unimpaired 75-year-old.

When calling 911, do not merely say, “My relative is missing.” State clearly:

“This is a vulnerable missing person with cognitive impairment who may not recognize danger, may not know how to return home, and may be at immediate risk.”

That information affects priority and resource allocation.

Will an alert go to all cell phones?

Usually **no**.

Cell-phone emergency messages are sent through the federal **Wireless Emergency Alerts**, or WEA, system. They are geographically targeted rather than sent automatically to every phone nationwide.

Receipt depends on several factors:

- the alerting authority chooses to use WEA;
- the situation meets that authority's criteria;
- the phone is in the selected geographic area;
- the carrier and phone support WEA;
- the phone is turned on and connected to a participating cellular network;
- the relevant alert category has not been disabled by the user;
- the device is not temporarily outside cellular coverage.

AMBER Alerts can be delivered through WEA, television, radio, highway signs, online services, and other channels. However, users can ordinarily disable the AMBER-alert category on their phones, so even AMBER Alerts do not literally reach every handset.

The newer Missing and Endangered Persons alert category

The FCC established a dedicated **Missing and Endangered Persons**, or **MEP**, alert code in 2024 for people who do not qualify for an AMBER Alert. The category is intended to support alerts involving missing vulnerable adults, Indigenous persons, and other endangered missing people. It allows clearer use of the Emergency Alert System and compatible Wireless Emergency Alert mechanisms.

This does **not** mean that every report of a missing cognitively impaired person automatically generates a WEA. States, Tribal governments, and local authorized agencies still decide:

- whether the person is endangered;
- whether enough useful information is available;
- what geographic area should receive the alert;

- whether a mass cell-phone alert would assist rather than hinder the search.

Overuse can cause alert fatigue and can expose vulnerable people's private information unnecessarily.

What 911 will need

For a missing child or vulnerable adult, have the following ready:

- recent photograph;
- full name and age;
- physical description;
- clothing;
- time and exact place last seen;
- direction of travel;
- cognitive and medical conditions;
- essential medications and how long the person can safely go without them;
- whether the person responds to their name;
- likely destinations or habitual walking routes;
- vehicle description, license plate, and keys missing;
- phone number and location-sharing information;
- tracking device information;
- whether the person is attracted to water, roads, woods, familiar former homes, or workplaces.

For Little Whale Cove, proximity to the ocean, wooded ravines, steep terrain, Highway 101, and tsunami-zone areas should be stated explicitly. Those facts could influence the urgency and the immediate deployment of Search and Rescue.

Practical answer to your scenarios

Situation	Call 911?	Automatic AMBER/Silver/cell alert?
Child apparently abducted and in grave danger	Yes, immediately	AMBER may be issued after law-enforcement confirmation
Child wandered away	Yes, if not located immediately or risk exists	Usually not AMBER; other urgent search tools may be used
Teen runaway with no known danger	Report promptly	Generally not AMBER
Older adult with dementia disappears on foot	Yes, immediately	Endangered-person response likely; mass phone alert is discretionary
Cognitively impaired adult of any age disappears	Yes, immediately	Age does not preclude an endangered-person response
Healthy competent adult is unexpectedly unreachable	Report based on circumstances	Usually no mass alert unless evidence indicates danger

The safest assumption is: **call 911 promptly, provide the vulnerability facts clearly, and do not wait for an AMBER or Silver Alert before beginning neighborhood and law-enforcement coordination.**

Looking West (Altitude = 5 m)



Looking West (Altitude = 10 m)



Looking West (Altitude = 15 m)



Looking West (Altitude = 20 m)



Looking West (Altitude = 30 m)



Looking West (Altitude = 60 m)



Looking West (Altitude = 90 m)



Altitude = 120 m (394 feet) for remaining imagery

Looking W toward LWC Cliffs



Looking N towards Depoe Bay



Looking E towards the Coast Range



Looking S towards Whale Cove
(our house is circled)



Looking down at LWC Rec Center from 120 m (394 ft)

