Police public alert software evaluation checklist

Version 1 - November 1, 2026. A blank record for approved fictional exercises. Prepared by Detailr Corp., developer of Lucas and Sentinel; the publisher has a commercial interest in this category.

This is an editorial framework, not an independent vendor assessment, procurement approval, government standard or compliance certification. Apply the same evidence requirements to Sentinel.

Review record	Complete in your agency-approved notes
Product / version	_____
Intended use / date	_____
Decision owner / role	_____

How to use the worksheet

Select mandatory requirements before testing. Record one evidence state: not reviewed; vendor description only; documentation reviewed; demonstrated in the tested version; not met; or outside proposed scope. Match the evidence to the requirement. Documented evidence is not the same as a demonstrated workflow.

A mandatory gap cannot be offset by unrelated features. Outside scope requires a reason. Do not enter personal, case or confidential security material. Use approved fictional records and a test environment; do not issue a live public alert to test this checklist.

The 24 requirements on the next three pages are grouped by the work they examine. Use the companion CSV for an editable record, and retain supporting evidence in your approved system.

Download companion tools and the full guide:

www.lucascommunity.com/resources/evaluating-community-safety-software/

Requirement group 1 of 6

Purpose and authority

Begin with the job and the people responsible for it.

ID / mandatory?	Requirement and evidence to retain	State / reference
01 [ ]	Define the problem and the present workflow. Retain one problem statement, current handoffs and a measurable question the evaluation can answer. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
02 [ ]	Identify who can authorize each kind of public message. Name the release authority and review route for a warning, a request for information and a correction. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
03 [ ]	Distinguish app publishing from official warning authority. If IPAWS or another official warning pathway is required, obtain evidence of the specific integration, authority and permitted use; a push notification is not that evidence. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
04 [ ]	Include the people who must operate and use the system. List dispatch/public-information, operational, records, technology and accessibility perspectives appropriate to the proposed use. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____

Review notes / unresolved owner and next action

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Mark mandatory only for the agreed use. Suggested examples on the website are editable; there is no universal passing score.

Requirement group 2 of 6

Message and resident experience

Ask a reader to explain the instruction, not just whether the screen looks clear.

ID / mandatory?	Requirement and evidence to retain	State / reference
05 [ ]	Identify the issuer, affected place, time and action. Give a fictional message to a reader who missed the demo; record their interpretation and unresolved questions. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
06 [ ]	Check text, maps, sound and planned languages together. Read the action without the map or color; test the relevant assistive output and have a speaker check each planned translation. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
07 [ ]	Correct, expire and close a message clearly. Show how a stale link, earlier screenshot and new update identify which instruction is current. Record who owns the correction. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
08 [ ]	Review notification permission and interruption behavior. Record device, OS/app version, settings and observed behavior. Do not infer special urgent-delivery permission from a product label. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____

Review notes / unresolved owner and next action

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Requirement group 3 of 6

Audience and channel fit

Evaluate the boundary and the delivery path as separate questions.

ID / mandatory?	Requirement and evidence to retain	State / reference
09 [ ]	Explain what a selected geographic area controls. Record the approved test boundary, recipient-selection rule and known limits; distinguish an alert area from a guaranteed audience. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
10 [ ]	Keep each issuer and jurisdiction identifiable. Test adjacent places and a user following more than one department. Identify the responsible publisher and information recipient. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
11 [ ]	Retain complementary official warning channels. List approved pathways and alternatives for people without the app, connectivity, a compatible device or a particular language. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
12 [ ]	Separate publish, observed receipt and missing observations. Keep timestamps and time zone, test conditions and non-receipt records. An accepted send or observed receipt does not establish understanding. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____

Review notes / unresolved owner and next action

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Requirement group 4 of 6

Incoming information and staffing

Follow a fictional observation to an accountable next step.

ID / mandatory?	Requirement and evidence to retain	State / reference
13 [ ]	Confirm the intended recipient of a resident submission. Return a labeled fictional tip, identify the receiving department and verify the supported evidence types in the version being evaluated. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
14 [ ]	Assign the next action and exercise absence coverage. Have the usual reviewer unavailable; demonstrate ownership, status, internal notes and the department-approved handoff. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
15 [ ]	State the monitoring and escalation expectations honestly. Record coverage hours, emergency alternatives and the public explanation. No queue should silently imply immediate review. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
16 [ ]	Test an unsupported or misdirected submission. Use approved fictional data to check the error, recipient explanation and appropriate next route without exposing a real person or case. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____

Review notes / unresolved owner and next action

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Requirement group 5 of 6

Information, access and evidence

Ask responsible personnel to examine the actual documents and behavior.

ID / mandatory?	Requirement and evidence to retain	State / reference
17 [ ]	Map collection, access, retention, export and deletion. Retain a data-flow explanation and applicable documents; distinguish vendor-held records from copies delivered to an agency. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
18 [ ]	Test staff access changes and account removal. Demonstrate the roles required for this use and the removal of a departing test user; ask what remains accessible in existing sessions. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
19 [ ]	Request evidence for security or compliance claims. Record the scope, version, date and reviewer of the relevant evidence. A sales statement, badge or contract heading is not a completed agency review. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
20 [ ]	Agree records, disclosure and incident responsibilities. Have the appropriate agency records, legal and technology personnel identify their duties, contacts and unresolved questions. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____

Review notes / unresolved owner and next action

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Requirement group 6 of 6

Implementation, cost and exit

A usable procurement decision includes the operating work after launch.

ID / mandatory?	Requirement and evidence to retain	State / reference
21 [ ]	Make the full cost model visible. Record current written setup, subscription/usage, training, staffing, support, accessibility, integration and exit costs; note assumptions and exclusions. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
22 [ ]	Test training and the support route. Ask a staff member who did not present the product to complete a task. Record assistance needed and exercise the agreed support channel. Needed: Observed demonstration	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
23 [ ]	Plan continuity, export and contract exit. Review an outage exercise, approved fallback, export format, assistance, retention and termination terms before the trial expands. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____
24 [ ]	Close the exercise with a decision and unresolved owners. Record proceed, narrow, retest or stop; cite the evidence and assign each gap an owner and review date. A high feature count cannot cancel a failed mandatory requirement. Needed: Reviewed documents	State: _____ Reference / next action: _____

Review notes / unresolved owner and next action

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Four fictional tabletop exercises

1. A time-bounded request for existing footage

Fictional tabletop: an authorized department wants observations or existing camera footage around a named public location during a defined period. No real incident or person is involved.

Observe: A reader can distinguish an information request from an instruction to search or confront someone. The test record has an accountable recipient and the original uncertainty is retained.

2. A closure changes after a message was shared

Fictional tabletop: a road-closure update is revised. Some readers have only an old screenshot.

Observe: A reader can find the current instruction without guessing from a social repost. Staff can explain the correction and expiry process.

3. The usual tip reviewer is unavailable

Fictional tabletop: a non-emergency test submission arrives during the department-defined absence of the usual reviewer.

Observe: The department can identify the next responsible person. The public interface does not imply immediate assistance that the operation cannot provide.

4. A test device does not show the expected alert

Fictional tabletop: one test device lacks the relevant permission or connectivity and another follows an adjacent jurisdiction.

Observe: The debrief separates sending, device receipt and audience understanding. Staff know the limits and fallback; no fictional delivery percentage is reported.

Keep a short decision record

Intended use; tested version; evidence accepted; mandatory gaps; responsible role; proceed, narrow, retest or stop; next review date. Record what would change the conclusion.

Record full ownership cost: setup, configuration, license/usage, training, staffing, support, accessibility, integration, continuity and exit. Use current written terms and real assumptions; no universal cost or savings figure is supplied.

Method and sources

Original worksheet and scenarios by Detailr Corp. Informed by the NIJ-sponsored Criminal Justice Technology Adoption and Implementation Guide (2025): nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/criminal-justice-technology-adoption-and-implementation-guide ; and NIJ Technology Research Portfolio: nij.ojp.gov/topics/equipment-and-technology/research-portfolio . Linked publications do not endorse this tool.