

**Alertcast™**  
**Emergency Notification Service**

**User's Guide**

# **Alertcast™**

## **Emergency Notification Service**

### **User's Guide**

Actual Software, Inc.  
Suite 228  
180 East Fifth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1633

|          |              |                       |
|----------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Support: | 651-665-0042 | support@alertcast.com |
| Sales:   | 651-221-0894 | sales@alertcast.com   |
| Fax:     | 651-265-3100 |                       |

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Product Information: | www.alertcast.com   |
| Customer Access:     | admin.alertcast.com |

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## Contact Information

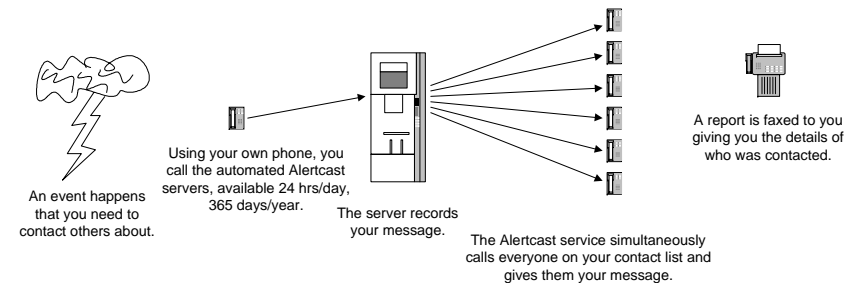
|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Kick-Off/Maintenance line                         | 1-877-400-1600                   |
| Pager Response line                               | 1-888-540-6685                   |
| Kick-Off/Maintenance line<br>(direct dial backup) | 1-651-855-5300                   |
| Pager Response line<br>(direct dial backup)       | 1-651-855-5230                   |
| Customer Support/Billing                          | 1-651-665-0042                   |
| 24 Hour emergency technical support (Pager)       | 1-651-629-4055                   |
| Sales   | 1-888-540-5919<br>1-651-221-0894 |

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| E-mail information requests, suggestions,<br>general sales, etc. | info@alertcast.com    |
| E-mail customer support. List changes, etc.                      | support@alertcast.com |

Information current effective February 15, 2004.

## Overview

Welcome to the Alertcast Emergency Notification Service—the most effective way to simultaneously broadcast your message to employees, crisis response teams, area residents, reserve units and others who require immediate notification. All you have to do is dial the Alertcast toll-free number from any touch-tone phone and follow the voice prompts or access the web interface at <http://admin.alertcast.com>.



## Suggestions

### Initial Test List

As an initiator, we strongly recommend that you create a practice or test list consisting of one or two contacts only, and you use this list to familiarize yourself with Alertcast.

### Train Users (Message Recipients)

Good training will make sure that group list members will respond quickly and correctly in a real emergency. After all, if the recipients are ill prepared it could compromise the success of your emergency notification. Adjust the level of training to the likelihood of notifying a particular list. Emergency response teams, first responders, contingency teams, and so forth should be fully trained. Training should also include all potential event initiators in addition to the recipients.

### Test Regularly

Conduct test exercises regularly to help users become familiar with the service and stay in practice using it. For example, conduct drills for your contingency response team once a month at a predetermined time, such as the first Wednesday of each month.

The type of organization of which you are part and the numbers of recipients who will be notified will determine the practice schedule you need. You may decide to run a test exercise monthly, quarterly or semiannually.

Getting Started

Before you use Alertcast for the first time...

- 1
- Make sure you have your correct account number and security code. You'll need these any time you call Alertcast or access the web interface.
- 2
- Identify when the Alertcast service will be used and who should be notified. Clear criteria will avoid confusion and delays.
- 3
- Determine key points to include in your messages. When you have a predetermined list of key points to include in an emergency message, you're less likely to overlook something when an actual emergency occurs.
- 4
- Determine the type of notification you want. Make sure you understand the differences between Standard and Express Notification.
- 5
- Select a default fax number to receive reports. This should be the fax machine most likely to be available during an emergency to your response management team so they can quickly make informed decisions.

Group Lists

To use the Alertcast service, you will need a list or lists of the telephone numbers (and/or pager numbers) of the recipients you wish to contact. These lists can be sent to Support at Actual Software (support@alertcast.com) by email, loaded by you directly from the Internet, or you can use the telephone interface to load and maintain lists. We recommend using the Internet interface for group list maintenance whenever possible and only using the telephone list interface for small changes.

The recipients you want to contact can be arranged into groups or you can have a single large group. Lists can be organized by job function, department, geographic location, work hours, and so forth depending on the needs of your organization. More than one group list can be used for each event.

Lists are identified by a three-digit code. For example, both 001 and 101 are valid list numbers.

The same recipient may appear in multiple groups. When sending a message, multiple groups may be combined and contacted in a single event. Individuals that appear on more than one list will be contacted only once.

Each recipient on a list requires a primary contact number. Each recipient may also have a secondary contact number. For reporting purposes, it is recommended that you also include a name.

A contact number consists of a 10-digit telephone number, the type of call to place (voice or page), and the number of attempts to make before giving up at this number.

Example List

|             |            |       |   |            |        |
|-------------|------------|-------|---|------------|--------|
| Doe, John   | 9895551212 | Voice | 3 |            |        |
| Smith, Jane | 2225551212 | Voice | 1 | 2225551255 | Page 3 |

In this example, John Doe only has a primary contact number. Alertcast will call John Doe up to three times per event. Since it is a voice call, the Alertcast service will play voice messages and may attempt to get a response.

Jane Smith has both a primary and secondary contact number. The Alertcast service will first make a single call to her primary number. If that attempt is unsuccessful in reaching Jane Smith, Alertcast will then call her paging service, sending up to three pages.

When Jane Smith gets paged, it displays the Alertcast response line number and the event number. The event number is required and Jane Smith must know her primary contact number to retrieve the message.

Alertcast uses the primary number to uniquely identify each recipient. For example in this situation, Alertcast only knows it is Jane Smith

responding when she keys in her primary number through the response line when receiving the message for this event. Each recipient must have a unique primary contact number.

## Alertcast Telephone Interface

When you phone the Alertcast telephone interface, you will be asked to enter both your account number and a security code. This will get you to the main menu.

### Main Menu

The main menu has the following options:

- 1 – Start a new event.
- 2 – Set the default fax number.
- 3 – Fax a copy of a group list.
- 4 – Add a new group.
- 5 – Edit a group list.
- 6 – Delete a group list.
- 7 – Edit prerecorded messages.
- 9 – Quit

## Starting a New Event

To contact one or more groups, select 1 to start a new event. Alertcast will walk you through a series of questions about which groups to contact, how you want to contact them and what kind of information you want to get back. If at any point in the process you make an error and wish to back up, press the \* key and you will move back to the previous question. Backing up from the group list question will return you to the main menu.

On the following page is a checklist of the questions or selections necessary to start a new event.

Your internal procedures should prepare event initiators to provide this data as it reflects the types of situations they are likely to encounter.

## Event initiation checklist

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>List(s)</b>            | Group list number(s) to notify.   |
| <b>Retry interval</b>     | Amount of time between attempts to contact group members.   |
| <b>Maximum event time</b> | How long the event remains active. Alertcast can calculate a reasonable value.  |
| <b>Event type</b>         | Standard or Express Notification are the common choices.  |
| <b>Report type</b>        | Know what report you need to manage your situation.   |
| <b>Fax destination</b>    | You can use your default fax number or override it.   |
| <b>Message</b>            | Record a custom message or use one of your prerecorded messages.  |
| <b>Accept event</b>       | You'll need to accept the event to actually start it. If you simply hang up or return to the main menu the event will <b>NOT</b> start. |



## Detailed Description of an Event Initiation

Enter a group list number. This is a three-digit number such as 101.

You must press the three digits on your telephone keypad and then press the # key to indicate you've entered the number. Alertcast will repeat the three digits and ask you to confirm they are the correct digits. Press 1 to confirm or press 2 to reenter. If you press 1, Alertcast will add the list to the event. (There may be a short pause if you have a very large list.) Once you have added at least one group to the event, you can press the # key to move on to the next step.

Enter the retry interval. This will control the amount of time between calls to the same recipient. Enter the number of minutes and press the # key to indicate you've entered the number.

The interval must be between 5 and 60 minutes. Using our example group list and an interval of 5 minutes, Jane would get called at her primary number immediately. If she isn't contacted, she will get paged 5 minutes later (and again at 10 and 15 minutes after the initial phone call, if no response is received). The retry interval will also control the time between reports if periodic reporting is selected (see the description of the report type question for more information).

Enter the maximum event time. You can press the # key to skip this question and Alertcast will calculate a reasonable value based on your responses to the other questions.

If you wish to specify a timeframe for the event, you can enter the number of minutes after which Alertcast will force the event to close. If the maximum time you enter is shorter than the time that could be required to complete all attempts for one or more of the recipients in the event list, you will be warned and asked to confirm the limit on the event time. Keep in mind that this is the maximum event time and that the event may close earlier if enough recipients are contacted - either everyone on your list or your quota, if you have one.

Select your event type. The choices are Express Notification, Standard Notification or Standard Notification with a Minimum Quota.

Express Notification will call each recipient and play your message up to three times. It does not require that the recipient contacted know anything about Alertcast.

Standard Notification will call each recipient and ask that the recipient enter his or her primary notification number to verify that Alertcast has reached the intended recipient. Once the primary notification number is validated, your message is played and the recipient called is asked to select how they are responding.

If Standard Notification with a Minimum Quota is selected for the event type, Alertcast will ask you to enter the number of recipients required. You must enter at least one recipient. There is no maximum, but selecting a number greater than the number of recipients in your event is the equivalent of doing a Standard notification without selecting a quota. Alertcast will close the event once the quota has been filled.

Select your report type. There are three options: a summary report, periodic reports, or a confirmation report.

For summary reporting, Alertcast waits until the event is closed and no more responses will be requested or accepted before it faxes a report. The report lists who was contacted, what response they provided and for anyone not contacted the report gives some indication of the reason why the contact failed. Be aware that it may take some time for the report to be sent as Alertcast may be waiting for recipients who were paged or left voice mail to call back.

For periodic reporting, Alertcast faxes the current state of the event on a periodic basis. The first report will be sent at the end of the first interval. Additional reports will be sent every subsequent interval until the event is closed. Once the event closes, a summary report will be sent.

For confirmation reporting, Alertcast will immediately send a report listing all the recipients in the event. No status will be listed (the calls are in process) and no additional reports will be sent.

Enter the fax number where the report(s) should be sent. If you've configured Alertcast with a default fax number, you can press the # key to use it.

If you don't wish to use your default fax number (or don't have one), enter the 10-digit phone number where the reports can be faxed followed by the # key.

You may now enter a second fax number where an identical copy of the report will also be sent. If you don't want a second copy of the report, press the # key to skip it. If you would like a second copy, enter the 10-digit fax number, followed by the # key.

Select or record the event message.

If you have one or more prerecorded messages, you will be asked if you want to record a custom message or if you want to select a prerecorded message, otherwise this question is skipped and the custom message option is selected for you.

If a custom message is selected, Alertcast will prompt you to record a message. Begin speaking after the beep. Press the # key when you are done recording.

For a prerecorded message, Alertcast will prompt for the message ID. This is a two-digit number that was selected when you originally recorded the message. Enter the two-digit number and press the # key to indicate you are done entering the number. Alertcast will echo the number and play the message title (recorded at the same time the message was recorded). Press 1 to confirm that you wish to use the message, or press 2 to cancel and return to the message type selection question (custom or prerecorded).

The event is now ready to start.

Alertcast will ask for confirmation to start the event. As soon as you press 1 to confirm the event, Alertcast will provide an event number and start calling recipients.

If you are not sure if you are ready to start the event, you can review your message by pressing 2, or rerecord your message by pressing 3. If you no longer wish to start the event, press 9 to return to the main menu.

Note that if you are starting an event you **must** wait until you have an event number before hanging up to insure that your event has started.

## Set the Default Fax Number

You are not required to have a default fax number but by setting one you can decrease the time it takes to start an event and reduces the possibility of error when entering the fax number.

When you select this option, Alertcast will play your current default fax number (if any). If you do not wish to change the default fax number, press the \* key to return to the main menu. If you do wish to change the default fax number, enter a new 10-digit fax number followed the # key.

Alertcast will repeat the number you entered and will ask you to press 1 to confirm the change. Pressing 1 saves the fax number as your default fax number. Pressing 2 will give you a chance to reenter the fax number. Pressing \* will return you to the main menu.

## Fax (Print) a Copy of a Group List

Use this option to have a copy of a group list faxed to you.

The fax will list the name of each recipient in the group along with the recipient's primary and secondary notification number, message type, and maximum number of attempts. You can use this to keep track of which recipients are on which lists or to verify that any changes have been entered correctly.

## Adding, Deleting or Editing a Group List

This set of options allows you to maintain group lists using only your touch-tone telephone.

### Add new group list

Adding a new group allows you to enter a new three-digit group list number and creates an empty group. You must create an empty group before you can add recipients to the group list.

### Delete a group list

Deleting a group list will permanently delete a list and the information for all the recipients on the group list. It will ask you to confirm the deletion prior to deleting your list.

### Edit a group list

Editing a group list will allow you to add or delete recipients and change the information about the recipients on your group lists.

To edit recipients in a group list, you will need to select which list to edit. Only one list can be edited at a time and if you have the recipient on multiple group lists, you will need to repeat the changes on each of the group lists.

## Adding, Deleting or Editing a Recipient

To use these functions you must first select a group list to edit.

### Add new recipient

To add a recipient, enter the primary notification number, the primary notification type, and the maximum number of times to try to contact the recipient at the primary number. You may also enter the recipient's name and a secondary contact number. See the editing section for details on entering the information.

### Delete a recipient

Delete a recipient using their primary notification number. The service will ask for confirmation before deleting a recipient.

### Edit a recipient

To edit a recipient, you will need their primary notification number. When editing a recipient, you can individually edit the recipient's primary notification number, primary notification type, primary notification attempts, name, secondary notification number, secondary notification type or secondary notification attempts.

The data requirements for changes over the phone are consistent with group list data provided to Alertcast through other means, e.g. phone numbers must still be ten digits.

### Notes on entering names

If entering names over the telephone, note that characters are entered using two digit codes. The letters of the alphabet are represented by the telephone key the letter appears on and the position of the letter in the set of letters on that key. For example, the letter A is 21 because it is on the 2 key and it is the first letter on that key. B is 22 and C is 23. The letter D is 31 since it is on key 3 and it is the first letter on key 3. The two letters that don't appear on the keypad are Q and Z. Both are treated as the fourth letter on the key that they would logically be on. For Q, that would be 74, and Z is 94. Numbers are treated as the 0<sup>th</sup> item on the key. So for example, 1 is 10 and 9 is 90. There are also two special characters, 11 is a space and 12 is a comma. You can remove the last character you entered using 13 (backspace). To get online help or to hear what you have entered repeated, press 0#. When you are done entering the name, press # by itself.

## Edit Prerecorded Messages

You have the option of prerecording messages that can be used during a notification event. This is useful for a static or fixed message that is used, unchanged, for a specific situation likely to be repeated.

Prerecording can save significant time and reduce the possibility of human error when starting an event. Prerecorded messages can be useful for test messages and detailed or lengthy instructions.

If you have prerecorded messages, you still have the option of recording a custom message for an event.

## Quit

This causes the server to hang up the telephone connection. It is not necessary to use the Quit option as you can hang up at any time and the server will detect it.





## Alertcast Notification Program

During an event, the Alertcast notification program will contact the recipients on your group list. It operates in a number of different ways depending on the options you selected when you started the event.

### Express Notification

Express Notification calls the number and, if answered, the call is announced as an Alertcast notification and your recorded message is played. The announcement and your message are repeated twice more (for a total of three times). If the message is being recorded on an answering machine or voice mail, one and one half copies of the message are usually recorded.

Express Notification does not gather any response from the recipients called and they can hang up as soon as they have listened to your message. Reports will give an acknowledged status for Express Notification calls that are answered. Since the recipient isn't providing any feedback, there is no way to know if the correct recipient was contacted and no response type information will be available. Reports will simply state if the call was answered or not. For any numbers that are not answered, Alertcast will continue calling, first at the primary number and then at the secondary number, at the interval you picked until the number of attempts specified for that recipient's primary and secondary numbers has been met.

Express Notification is most useful when recipients aren't going to be trained, aren't expecting a notification or it's simply impractical to train them. Area resident notification, for example, is typically done with Express Notification.

### Standard Notification

Standard Notification calls the number and, if answered, plays a short introduction and asks the recipient who answered to enter his or her primary notification number. If a valid primary number is entered, your recorded message is played and the called recipient is given the choice of entering a response or hearing the message again.

Response choices are "responding," "not responding" and "acknowledge." If a response is entered, Alertcast repeats the selected response and the call ends. Responses are included on the event reports.

If the recipient hangs up after entering their primary notification number, but before entering a response, the reports will indicate a status of acknowledged.

If no primary number is entered, the number for the response line is played along with the event ID. If no response or an invalid response is entered, the introduction, question, and information is repeated twice more. Recipients can call into the Alertcast service with this information and receive the message if the event is still active.

If the event is a Standard Notification with a Maximum Quota, Alertcast doesn't consider contact to have been made until the response has been entered.

### Pager Notifications

For both Express and Standard Notification, the pager number is called and if answered, a page is issued. The pager message will consist of the response line number, a dash, the five-digit event code, another dash, and the digits 911. Example: 8885551212-12345-911



## Alertcast Response Line

When a recipient is contacted by pager, or a Standard Notification attempt leaves a message on an answering machine or voice mailbox, the recipient will need to call the Alertcast response line to hear the event message. The response line number is shown on the pager and is left on voice mail or answering machine messages.

Note that messages left by Alertcast on voice mail or answering machines are subject to the successful automated interaction between Alertcast and whatever voice mail or answering machine is used.

Recipients will need to enter the five-digit event number (also shown on the pager or in a voice mail message) and his or her 10-digit primary notification number to access the event message.

If the event is a Standard Notification, the recipient will get a chance to respond to your message or hear your message repeated.



## Reports

### Event Report

The following sample report is for a standard event using list 001 and a minimum quota of 2.

Event 12345

Alertcast Status Report

Page 1 of 1

List(s) 001

Event Launch 01/20/2003 13:45:02

Notification Type Standard

Report Time 01/20/2003 14:06:12

Report Type Complete

Account Name/Number WidgetFactory/11119999

| Name         | Primary Phone | Secondary Phone | Final Result | Contacted at | Time     | Attempt Log |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| Doe, John    | 657-123-4567  | 657-123-7654    | Yes          | 657-123-4567 | 13:45:54 | v:OK        |
| Smith, Jane  | 657-123-8787  |                 |              |              | 13:53:12 | v:BSY v:NR  |
| Johnson, Tom | 657-123-2034  | 657-123-8888    | Yes          | 657-123-2034 | 14:03:32 | v:NR p:OK   |
| Wilson, Sue  | 657-123-5644  |                 | No           | 657-123-5644 | 13:52:34 | v:NR v:OK   |

### Explanation of the Event Report

#### Headings

List(s) are the list or lists that you choose to use for this event. Although these list numbers are the ones used to assemble the numbers to call for the event, you should look at the actual event detail to determine who exactly was called.

Event Launch is the time the event was started. It is shown in 24-hour format for the central US time zone (CST or CDT), which is the default. Contact support to change this to request a different time zone. It is set at the moment you press 1 to start the event (after entering all your lists and other event information and recording your message).

Report Time is the time the report was generated by Alertcast, not delivery time.

Notification Type is either Standard or Express, based on your selection when the event was started.

Report Type can be Initial, Periodic or Complete.

An Initial report will list the recipients included in the event, but since it is generated before any calls have been made, there will not be any status information listed.

A Periodic report will show a recent snapshot of the event. Changes are still taking place and will show up on the next report.

A Complete report shows the final status of the event. At this point the event has been closed and no new calls will be placed and no new information will be accepted.

Account Name/Number is the account that was used to start this event.

#### **Table Columns**

Name is the name you gave us to associate with the primary number.

Primary Phone is the primary phone number for this recipient. The primary number is the first number we attempt to use to contact the recipient and can be used to uniquely identify a recipient. It is also the number the recipient will need to enter for a standard notification or when responding to a page.

Secondary Phone is an alternate phone number to use for contacting the recipient. If the recipient doesn't have an alternate number, this will be left blank.

Final Results is the status for the recipient. It can be Yes, No, Acknowledge or blank.

Yes means the recipient selected the option Yes, I will be responding to your message.

No means the recipient selected the option No, I will not be responding to your message.

Acknowledge means the recipient either selected the message-understood option or the recipient failed to enter an option before hanging up.

If this is still blank, it indicates that this recipient has not yet been successfully contacted.

Contacted at indicates the number at which the recipient has been successfully contacted. This will be either the primary or secondary phone number. It will generally indicate which number is better for you to use for manually contacting them with more information.

Time is the most recent time an attempt was made to contact the recipient. Once the recipient is successfully contacted, no additional attempts are made and this will be the time at which the recipient was successfully contacted.

Attempt Log lists the responses that Alertcast received from the telephone carrier when calling this recipient. Each attempt is in the form of [type]:[result], where type is either a "v" for voice or a "p" for page and the result is one of the following:

- OK The call was answered and the message was delivered.
- NR No response: The call was answered, but this is a standard notification and the primary notification number was not entered. This could be because an answering machine or the wrong recipient answered it, or it could indicate a need for additional training. If a message was left and the recipient calls the response line, enters the event number, and enters their primary notification number, the status will change to OK.
- NAN No answer: The phone rang but was never answered.
- BSY Busy: The phone number was busy.
- POK Page OK: The call was answered and the pager tones were sent. Assuming the recipient's pager is on and in range, the page has been sent and Alertcast is waiting for the recipient to call back on the response line. If they do call back and enter the event number and primary notification number, the status will change to OK.
- OPR Operator Intercept. The call did not go through because an operator intercept was received. This could be because the number is not valid, or it could be an "all circuits are busy" message. You may be able to find out more information by dialing the number that got the OPR status from your own phone.
- IP In-process. The status can not be determined because the attempt is in the process of completing.
- OTH Other status. Consecutive attempts may have overlapped.

## Group List Report

The group list report is available on demand from the Alertcast administration programs main menu. Its main purpose is to allow you to review your current list setup.

The report heading includes your account name and number, along with the group list number the report is for.

The body of the report lists each recipient's name and contact information:

The name is for reporting purposes only and has no influence on contacting the participants.

The primary number is both the number where the recipient should be called and a unique identifier for the recipient.

The secondary number is optional and if present, indicates an alternate number where the recipient can be reached if all attempts to contact the primary number have failed.

The type columns refer to the preceding number and indicate if the number will reach a recipient or a pager service.

The attempt column indicates the maximum number of times the number will be attempted. The primary number will be called its full attempt count before the secondary number is tried for the first time. Once the secondary number has been attempted its full attempt count, no additional attempts will be made to contact the recipient.

### Sample Group List Report

Alertcast Group List Report

Account Name: WidgetFactory

Number: 11119999

List Number: 001

| Name         | Primary Number | Type     | Attempts | Secondary |
|--------------|----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Number       | Type           | Attempts |          |           |
| Doe, John    | 657-123-4567   | Voice    | 1        | Voice 1   |
| Smith, Jane  | 657-123-8787   | Voice    | 2        |           |
| Johnson, Tom | 657-123-2034   | Voice    | 1        | Page 2    |
| Wilson, Sue  | 657-123-5644   | Voice    | 3        |           |

## Frequently Asked Questions

**I want to call both the primary and secondary numbers as fast as possible.**

To maximize the speed of contact, you can add the secondary numbers as additional primary numbers instead. This way both the primary and secondary numbers will get called immediately. The tradeoff for more speed is that some recipients may get contacted twice (once at the primary and again at the secondary number).

**I have some recipients with more than two numbers, how can I reach them at the additional locations?**

Add the third number as a new primary number. This works particularly well if one of their numbers is a pager. Alertcast will call them and send a page at the same time. By continuing to add additional primary numbers, there is no limit on how many numbers at which one recipient can be reached. Again, remember some recipients may be contacted more than one time.

**I have multiple recipients with the same primary number. How do I handle this? How can I determine which one got the message?**

Assuming you are using Standard Notification, you can set up each recipient with an artificial primary number and set the attempts to 0. Set the secondary number to the shared contact number (secondary numbers need not be unique). The artificial primary numbers will never get called because of the zero attempt count. The secondary (real) number will get called and recipients at that number should enter their dummy primary number, not the number actually dialed. Note that Alertcast will continue to call the other recipients at that number until the attempt count is met for each or they have been contacted.

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