



## Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)

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**Banning Airport**  
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By Kevin Walker

I was just sitting down to homemade apple pie with some close friends when we were interrupted by the telephone. Sure enough it was Walt Walker with news of an ELT (emergency locator transmitter) going off in the Banning area. I stopped and picked up the No. 1 van and then picked up Walt and headed for the Banning Sheriff's office. On the way Walt told me that earlier in the evening a pilot flying through the Banning pass reported an ELT going off in the vicinity of the Banning Airport. Fellow team member John Dew and his son Roy were already at the Banning Station when we arrived. Walt decided to see if we could pick up a signal from the parking lot there, so we went ahead and set up the teams DF (direction finding) equipment. Sure enough the signal was coming from the airport. So we all drove over to the airport to start checking to make sure that it was a plane on the airport and not one up in the rugged hills near the airport.

To make a long story short. After spending nearly two hours chasing signals all over the place, Walt decided to set his DF equipment at a very low sensitivity. He then started walking up and down the flight lines. On his third row of aircraft, just as he passed a twin engine Apache, his equipment went off with the strange sounding wail. Sure enough, after getting the pilot's window open, and then reaching around to the ELT and turning the switch, the sound quit. Apparently the ELT was accidentally turned on that day while the pilot was servicing his aircraft. So much for the ELT. We did learn an important lesson, though, an ELT signal will go in many directions when near metal buildings, such as aircraft hangers. What a fun way to spend a Sunday evening.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.