

Mixalert User Manual

Overview

Mixalert is a menu bar application that monitors Pro Tools for potentially problematic automation and editing modes. When these modes are active, the application displays visual alerts on your screen to help you avoid unintended automation writes or editing mistakes.

The application runs in the background and continuously monitors Pro Tools. When an alert condition is detected, you'll see coloured borders around your Pro Tools display and status messages in the menu bar.

Alert Types

Mixalert monitors six different alert conditions:

AFE (Automation Follows Edit) Alert

Purpose: Warns you when Automation Follows Edit is turned OFF. AFE should typically be ON to ensure automation moves correctly when you edit regions.

Colour: Orange

When Triggered: When AFE is disabled in Pro Tools

Shuffle Alert

Purpose: Warns you when Shuffle edit mode is active. Shuffle mode can cause regions to move unexpectedly when editing.

Colour: Red

When Triggered: When Shuffle edit mode is selected

Preview Alert

Purpose: Warns you when Preview mode is active. Preview mode allows you to audition automation changes, but it's possible to forget you're in Preview and spend 10min writing an automation pass which you'll never get back. NOTE: Will force-open the Automation window. Disable this feature if you really really want it to stay closed.

Colour: Green

When Triggered: When Preview mode is enabled in the Automation window

Special Option: "Only When Writing In Playback" - When enabled, the Preview alert only triggers when Preview is ON AND Pro Tools is playing AND the CAPTURE button is lit. This mode tries to only flash the screen when the "bad thing" is happening, rather than leave it on constantly, potentially habituating the user to the green border and undermining the alert entirely.

Layered Editing Alert

Purpose: Warns you when Layered Editing mode is active. This mode can break automation badly and silently and should not be used in Post.

Colour: Blue

When Triggered: When Layered Editing is enabled



Suspend Automation Alert

Purpose: Warns you when Suspend Automation is active. NOTE: Will force-open the Automation window. Disable this feature if you really really want it to stay closed.

Colour: Red

When Triggered: When the Suspend Automation button is enabled in the Automation window

Delay Compensation Alert

Purpose: Warns you when Delay Compensation is turned OFF.

Colour: Pink

When Triggered: When Delay Compensation is disabled

Solo Alert

Purpose: Warns you when some track in your session is Solo'd.

Colour: Yellow

When Triggered: When a track is in Solo, depending on the state of the special "Only when recording or bouncing" option.

Destructive Record Alert

Purpose: Warns you when you are in Destructive Record mode.

Colour: Red

When Triggered: When Destructive or Destructive Punch are enabled.

Flasher Modes

Each alert type can be configured with one of three flasher modes:

OFF: No visual border is displayed for this alert type, even when the condition is active. The alert will still appear in the menu bar status.

ON: The border flashes on and off in a repeating cycle. This provides a noticeable but non-intrusive alert.

STATIC: The border remains constantly visible whenever the alert condition is active.

Border Sizes

Each alert type can be configured with one of four border sizes. Border thickness is proportional to screen height:

Mini: Very thin border (1.25% of screen height)

Small: Thin border (2.5% of screen height)

Medium: Moderate border (5% of screen height)

Large: Thick border (10% of screen height)

Multiple Alerts

When multiple alerts are active simultaneously, the application displays concentric borders. Each active alert gets its own colored ring, layered from outermost to innermost. The largest border size among active alerts determines the overall border thickness, and each alert's color is displayed in its own ring.



The menu bar status shows all active alerts combined (e.g., "AFE OFF + SHUFFLE ON + PREVIEW ON"). When multiple alerts are active, the menu bar text appears in purple. When only one alert is active, the menu bar text uses that alert's color.

Flasher Opacity Modes

The global opacity setting affects how visible all borders are:

Low: Borders are more transparent (0.5x multiplier)

Medium: Standard opacity (1.0x multiplier) - Default

High: Borders are more opaque (2.0x multiplier)

Flasher Displays

Flash All Displays: When enabled, borders appear on all connected displays.

Flash Pro Tools Display: When enabled (default), borders appear only on the display containing the Pro Tools Edit window.

Flash specific display: A specific display can be chosen and will be remembered by both name and display number in your current arrangement.

Flasher Speed

Multiple flash speeds can be chosen, and these also affect the frequency at which Mixalert will check Pro Tools for state changes. Faster flashers will increase system load.

Disable Flashers

Flashers can be disabled permanently or for a user-defined temporary stand-down period. This enables you to pause the flashers while temporarily working in some dangerous Pro Tools mode, safe in the knowledge that the alerts will resume even if you forget.

You can cancel a temporary flasher "disable", but selecting it a second time or by selecting "resume".

Note that the "Disable..." options only disable the full screen flashers, not the actual alert detection, nor the menu bar text alert.

Bypass Mixalert

Completely disables all Mixalert functionality. No menu bar alerts, no flashers, no calls to Pro Tools or system services. This feature is obviously pretty dangerous but can be used in the unlikely event that Mixalert is causing trouble in Pro Tools or dragging unacceptably on system resources.

Auto-Dismiss Automation Alerts

Mixalert can automatically dismiss certain Pro Tools alert dialogs. It allows you to set the Pro Tools "Suppress Automation Warnings" preference to OFF, and then have the most benign warnings automatically dismissed, leaving the important ones for you to address.



Dismiss Write To Selection Warnings: When enabled, automatically clicks "OK" on Pro Tools alerts about writing automation to the entire selection length.

Dismiss Write To Session Length Warnings: When enabled, automatically clicks "OK" on Pro Tools alerts about writing automation to the entire session length.

These options help prevent alert dialogs from interrupting your workflow, but use them with caution as they will dismiss important warnings from Pro Tools.

NOTE: the most concerning Pro Tools alert is encountered when starting playback, then making a selection, writing automation to selection, then stopping. In this case automation is written to the entire session length and a special warning is thrown by Pro Tools. Mixalert will never dismiss this special warning.

NOTE: These alerts can only be detected (and therefore, dismissed) in English and French languages.

How Modes Interact

Flasher Mode Priority: When multiple alerts are active, the most aggressive flasher mode determines the overall behavior.

Border Size: When multiple alerts are active, the largest border size among all active alerts determines the overall border thickness. Each alert's color is displayed in its own concentric ring.

Alert Visibility: An alert's border is only displayed if:

- The alert condition is active in Pro Tools
- The alert is enabled in the menu
- The alert's flasher mode is either STATIC (always visible) or ON (visible during the "lit" phase of the flash cycle)

Preview Alert Special Behavior: The Preview alert has an additional condition when "Only When Writing In Playback" is enabled. In this case, the alert only triggers when Preview is ON AND Pro Tools is playing AND the CAPTURE button is lit. This helps focus the alert on situations where users may be 'automating' nothing.

Configuration

All settings are accessed through the menu bar icon. Click the icon to open the menu, then navigate to each alert type's submenu to configure:

- Enable/Disable the alert
- Set the flasher mode (OFF, ON, or STATIC)
- Set the border size (Mini, Small, Medium, or Large)
- For Preview alert: Enable/Disable "Only When Writing In Playback"

These settings can be applied to all alerts by holding the Option modifier key.

Global settings are also available:

- Disable All Screen Flashers: Temporarily turns off all visual borders while keeping menu bar status active
- Opacity Mode: Set Low, Medium, or High opacity



- Display Mode: Choose to flash all displays or just the Pro Tools display
- Auto-dismiss options: Enable/Disable automatic dismissal of Pro Tools alert dialogs

All settings are automatically saved and persist between application launches.

Requirements

- macOS 10.15
- Pro Tools 2024.10 or greater
- Accessibility permissions (required for Preview, Suspend Automation, and Delay Compensation detection)

When you first launch the application, macOS will prompt you to grant accessibility permissions. These are required for the application to detect certain Pro Tools states.

For "Dismiss..." options, English or French language setting in Pro Tools.

Launcher Setup

Mixalert uses a launcher application to prevent startup timing issues with PACE copy protection. The launcher waits for the PACE iLok services to be running before launching the main Mixalert application. The installer adds the launcher to the users Login Items. Note that these login apps can take quite a while to launch after restarting your system (minutes), so you may not see Mixalert in your menu bar right away. In practice, it will always be there by the time you have Pro Tools launched.



Troubleshooting

Flashing on all displays when "Pro Tools Display" was set

You may have forgotten to allow Mixalert the "Accessibility" permission.

Go to System Prefs -> Security -> Accessibility, and delete Mixalert if present, then run it again by opening the main app in /Applications/Mixalert/Mixalert.app

Automation window keeps opening:

Alerts for SUSPEND and PREVIEW will force-open the Automation window. Disable this feature if you really really want it to stay closed.

Automation warnings not dismissed:

Firstly check that the desired types are enabled for dismissal in the menu.

Also note that these features only currently work in English and French.

No alerts appearing: Ensure Pro Tools is running with a session open and that the PTSL connection is established. Check that the alerts you want are enabled in the menu.

Borders not showing: Verify that "Disable All Screen Flashers" is not enabled. Check that at least one alert has a flasher mode set to ON or STATIC.

Preview/Suspend Automation/Delay Compensation alerts not working: These alerts require Accessibility permissions. Go to System Settings > Privacy & Security > Accessibility and ensure Mixalert is enabled.

Automation Window reopening: For Suspend & Preview alerts to work, Mixalert must be able to see the automation window, so it opens it if not found. There is currently no way around this other than disabling those alerts.

Menu Bar App Visibility Issues:

If you have many menu bar apps running, you may find that Mixalert's icon is hidden or difficult to locate after launching. macOS automatically hides menu bar items when there isn't enough space to display them all.

Showing Hidden Menu Bar Apps

When menu bar items are hidden, macOS displays them in a special overflow menu. To access hidden menu bar apps:

1. Look for the double chevron (») at the right side of your menu bar
2. Click the double chevron to reveal all hidden menu bar items
3. Your Mixalert icon should be visible in this overflow menu

Reordering Menu Bar Apps

You can rearrange menu bar apps to ensure Mixalert is always visible:

1. Hold down the Command (⌘) key
2. Click and drag the menu bar icon you want to move
3. Drag it to your desired position in the menu bar
4. Release to place it in the new location



Tip: Move Mixalert's icon to the right side of the menu bar (near the Apple menu) to ensure it's always visible, as macOS hides items from right to left when space is limited.

Hiding Unnecessary Menu Bar Apps

To reduce clutter and ensure Mixalert is always visible, you can hide menu bar items you don't frequently use:

1. Hold down the Command (⌘) key
2. Click and drag the menu bar icon you want to hide
3. Drag it off the menu bar (toward the bottom of the screen)
4. Release to hide it

The app will still be running, but its icon will be hidden from the menu bar.

Note: Some menu bar apps may reappear after restarting your Mac or the app. You may need to hide them again if they return.

Note: Menu bar management apps like "ICE" have been known to cause trouble with Mixalert opening on startup. Try killing those on startup if you encounter any other issues.

