

Summary of Ohio's Alert Programs

Ohio radio and television stations play a critical role in engaging the public to help locate abducted or endangered missing persons. This summary provides an overview of each alert and how broadcasters may wish to respond. The OAB encourages station management, news, engineering and programming staff to establish procedures on how to respond when an alert is issued and how to communicate updates and cancellations.

NOTE: Alert notifications come from a central clearinghouse. Any questions, concerns or tips received should be directed to the investigating law enforcement agency identified in the alert text.



AMBER Alert

This alert is only issued in cases of a confirmed child abduction when the general public's help may make a life or death difference in the safe recovery of the abducted child. Ohio has a statewide AMBER Alert plan, as well as numerous regional and local plans.

CRITERIA (ESTABLISHED IN OHIO REVISED CODE)

1. Law enforcement confirms the child is under 18 years of age;
2. Law enforcement believes the abduction poses a credible threat of immediate danger of seriously bodily harm or death to the child;
3. There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, the suspect and/or the circumstances surrounding the abduction to believe the activation of the alert will help locate the child; and,
4. A law enforcement agency determines that the child is not a runaway and has not been abducted as a result of a family abduction, unless the investigation determines the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death.

ALERT DISTRIBUTION

This alert is activated through the Emergency Alert System (EAS), using the Child Abduction Emergency (CAE) code. Alerts may be issued within one or more EAS operational areas, or statewide. EAS is only used for the initial activation. All updates and cancellations are communicated via secondary notification. EAS activation of an AMBER Alert will also trigger distribution of a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) to all WEA-enabled mobile devices.

Secondary notification of AMBER Alerts is provided via social media, email, text message or fax. Information about active alerts, including photos, is available at www.OhioAMBERPlan.org or 1.877.AMBER.OH.

The OAB recommends participating stations broadcast the AMBER Alert received via EAS immediately and rebroadcast the information every 15 minutes for the first two hours of an active alert.



Endangered Missing Child Alert

This alert is issued by law enforcement when a missing child is considered at risk but the case does not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert. This alert provides a way to enlist the public's help in locating an endangered missing child, without desensitizing the media and general public to AMBER Alerts.

CRITERIA

This alert is issued by law enforcement when a child is missing due to unknown circumstances and the investigating law enforcement agency considers the missing child to be at-risk of serious physical harm or death based on the circumstances of the disappearance. Additionally, sufficient descriptive information exists about the child and the circumstances to indicate the alert would help locate the child.

ALERT DISTRIBUTION

Endangered Missing Child Alerts are issued via social media, email, text message or fax. The EAS and WEA are NOT activated. Updates and cancellations are also delivered via social media, email, text message or fax. Notification about an Endangered Missing Child Alert is sent statewide to all who request to receive these alerts.

Additional information about the alert, including photos if available, is also posted on the Ohio Attorney General's website at <http://bit.ly/ohiomissingpersons>. A special toll-free number (1.866.693.9171) may also be activated for tips and alert information.

Participating stations are encouraged to air alerts originating in their broadcast area.

Receiving Alert Notifications

AMBER Alerts are initially distributed via EAS and WEA, with additional information available via social media, email, text message, or fax. All information regarding Endangered Missing Child, Endangered Missing Adult and Blue Alerts is distributed via social media, email, text message or fax. Updates and cancellations of all alerts are distributed via social media, email, text message or fax.

Station personnel interested in receiving these alerts or accessing social media links should visit www.oab.org/alert. Registration is also available through the Ohio Attorney General's Ohio Missing Persons Unit at 1.800.325.5604.



Endangered Missing Adult Alert

This alert is intended to help locate an endangered missing adult who has a mental impairment or is 65 years of age or older, and whose disappearance poses a threat of serious bodily harm or death.

CRITERIA (ESTABLISHED IN OHIO REVISED CODE)

1. Local investigating law enforcement agency confirms the individual is missing;
2. Individual is 65 years of age or older, or has a mental impairment;
3. Individual's disappearance poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual; and,
4. Sufficient descriptive information about the individual and the circumstances surrounding the disappearance exists that activation of the alert may help locate the individual.

ALERT DISTRIBUTION

This alert is issued via social media, email, text or fax. The EAS and WEA are NOT activated. Updates and cancellations are also delivered via social media, email, text message or fax. Notification is sent statewide to all who request to receive these alerts.

Additional alert information, including photos if available, is posted on the Ohio Attorney General's website at <http://bit.ly/ohiomissingadult>. A special toll-free number (1.866.693.9171) may also be activated for tips and alert information.

Participating stations are encouraged to air alerts originating in their broadcast area.



Ohio Blue Alert

This alert was established to enlist the public's help in locating a suspect involved in killing or seriously injuring a law enforcement officer, or in locating a missing law enforcement officer.

CRITERIA (ESTABLISHED IN OHIO REVISED CODE)

1. Local law enforcement agency confirms a law enforcement officer has been seriously injured or killed and a suspect has not been apprehended; OR a law enforcement officer is missing while on duty under circumstances warranting concern for his/her safety; and,
2. Sufficient descriptive information about the suspect and the circumstances surrounding the law enforcement officer's injury, death or disappearance exists to indicate that activation of the alert may help locate the suspect or the missing officer.

ALERT DISTRIBUTION

This alert is issued via social media, email, text message or fax. The EAS and WEA are NOT activated. Updates and cancellations are also delivered via social media, email, text message or fax. Notification about an Ohio Blue Alert is sent statewide to all who request to receive these alerts.

Additional information about the alert, including photos if available, is posted at <http://bit.ly/ohiobluealert>. A special toll-free number (1.877.262.3764) may also be activated for tips and alert information.

Participating stations are encouraged to air alerts originating in their broadcast area. The public should be reminded NOT to approach a dangerous suspect.