
MEDIA RELEASE

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Ohio Launches Missing Adult Alert

(June 20, 2008) Today, law enforcement officials across Ohio prepare to launch a new plan that creates a statewide emergency alert program to aid in the identification and location of missing adults who are endangered and are 65 years of age or older or have a mental impairment.

Alerting the public about a missing child (the Amber Alert) is something Ohio has championed since its inception. Included on that list of public notification Ohio adds missing and endangered adults. The revision of Senate Bill 87 most notably creates the statewide emergency alert program to aid in the identification and location of missing persons who have a mental impairment or are 65 years of age or older. The program is required to be a coordinated effort among the Governor's office, the Department of Public Safety, the Attorney General, law enforcement agencies, public and commercial television and radio broadcasters. Arguably, these and other provisions of the bill largely mirror current law relative to the above-noted program to aid in the identification and location of abducted children. The state of Ohio has decided that rather than establishing and maintaining a new program specific to missing persons who have a mental impairment or are 65-years of age or older, state government will simply integrate the bill's requirements into their existing emergency alert program for locating abducted children.

The missing adult alert system provides resources and coordination between various government agencies, law enforcement, media, and most importantly - the public who are the eyes and ears need to locate a missing person," says Mark Patchen, Technical Support Division Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Criteria to implement the Missing Adults system include:

- The local investigating law enforcement agency confirms that the individual is missing.
- The individual is 65 years of age or older or has a mental impairment.
- The disappearance of the individual poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual.
- There is sufficient descriptive information about the individual and the circumstances surrounding the individual's disappearance to indicate that activation of the alert will help locate the individual.

For more information about the Missing Adults Alert system, please log on to www.missingadults.ohio.gov or contact 614-799-3695.

The Ohio AMBER Alert Steering Committee responsible for the Missing Adults Alert System is composed of representatives from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency; Ohio State Highway Patrol; Ohio Department of Transportation; Attorney General's Office-Missing Children Clearinghouse; State Emergency Communications Committee; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Buckeye State Sheriff's Association; Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police; a broadcast industry designee; and a victim's advocate. Chairman of the committee is the Governor's designee Mark Patchen, Technical Support Division Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety.