

# Ohio Alerts Guidebook



# Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee

[www.ohioamberplan.org](http://www.ohioamberplan.org)

Attorney General's Office - Missing Children Clearinghouse  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
State Emergency Communications Committee  
Buckeye State Sheriff's Association  
Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police  
Victim's Advocate

Ohio Emergency Management Agency  
Ohio State Highway Patrol  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Ohio Association of Broadcasters  
Local/Regional AMBER Plan Representative



John Kasich, Governor

January 31, 2017

Dear Colleague,

The abduction of a child is a serious situation in which timely, coordinated, and definitive action is critical to giving law enforcement the greatest possible chance of recovering the child unharmed. In light of this fact, I am extremely pleased and grateful you have decided to take the steps necessary to better prepare yourself, your agency, and your community to respond to such an event. It is my sincere hope the information presented in this guidebook will be useful to you as we work as a team to ensure the safety of our children.

Should you have any training needs or alert program questions, please contact Staff Lieutenant Craig Cvetan at (614) 799-5971 or [ccvetan@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:ccvetan@dps.ohio.gov)

Sincerely,

Captain Kenneth Kocab  
Chair, Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee

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# AMBER Alert





## AMBER Alert

### **AMBER Alert Criteria:**

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 or serious 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 that activation of the alert will help locate the child.
4. A law enforcement agency determines 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.

### **AMBER Alert Initiation**

Follow your local or regional AMBER Alert Activation Plan.

If you do not have a local or regional plan, start here.

### **Activate Local EAS**

If unable to activate locally, notify state AMBER Alert Duty Officer when contacted.

### **NCIC Entry**

1. Complete the LEADS/NCIC Missing Persons Entry.
2. Control Field (MNP) = AA (AMBER Alert).
3. Message Key (MKE) = EME (Entry Endangered) or EMI (Entry Involuntary).

If you have questions or issues regarding an AMBER Alert contact the Ohio State Highway Patrol Communications Center (614) 466-2660 to speak with the AMBER Alert Duty Officer.

Once the AMBER Alert (AA) entry is made into the LEADS/NCIC System you will receive a call from the AMBER Alert Duty Officer. A representative with authority to make decisions needs to be available to discuss the alert and answer the following questions:

- Confirm AMBER Alert criteria.
- Have you activated the local EAS system for your region?
- If not, do you want the OSHP to activate your region also?
- Are you requesting other states to issue an alert?
- What regions will be activated?
- Have you notified your local Child Abduction Response Team (CART)?
- What number do you want the 1-877-AMBER-OH number routed to? (Recommend not to dispatch area).

### **Alert Actions**

Emergency Alert System (EAS) is initiated in the indicated regions.

The OHLEG Application is initiated, which automatically sends out e-mail to media outlets. OHLEG also generates the Twitter account.

1-877-AMBER-OH telephone line is activated.

A statewide administrative message teletype is sent out to all law enforcement agencies.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) initiates secondary notifications, including Wireless Emergency Alert and Facebook.

Ohio Department of Transportation Highway Signs are activated if available in the affected regions.

Statewide MCT message to all OSHP troopers.

Statewide and/or regional law enforcement radio broadcast.

Other regional notifications systems are activated when indicated (Lottery terminals, Trucker Alerts, billboards, Uber, etc.).

- Canceling an AMBER Alert
  - Once the child is recovered, send LEADS cancellation screen.
  - AMBER Alert Duty Officer will contact agency to discuss alert cancellation after time period (48 hours).

# Ohio Emergency Alert System Operational Areas



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<span style="background-color: #FF0000; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	<b>SOUTHWEST</b>	<span style="background-color: #9370DB; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	<b>SOUTH CENTRAL</b>	<span style="background-color: #00AEEA; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	<b>SOUTHEAST</b>

**Local AMBER Alert Plan**

Insert local  
AMBER Alert  
plan here.

CART Plan

Insert CART  
plan here.

# **Endangered Missing Child Alert**





## Endangered Missing Child Alert

There are situations where you will be investigating a missing child case, where the circumstances put the child's life in immediate danger, but for some reason the AMBER Alert criteria were not met for the case. The Endangered Missing Child Alert was created to alert the public to assist in locating the missing child. The criteria are:

1. Missing Child – Runaway, Lost Non-Witnessed / Non-Confirmed Abduction, child is missing with circumstances unknown.
2. Child's missing status confirmed by law enforcement and victim is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
3. There is enough descriptive information concerning the circumstances, suspect, vehicle, and/or victim, where the public would be able to assist.

You should follow your local agency investigative procedures to determine if the child meets the criteria for this alert and identify additional resources needed to safely locate the missing child. Enter the child into NCIC immediately upon taking the missing child report. NCIC/LEADS now allow the entering agency to include a photo with the missing child entry. This photo is crucial for a safe recovery of the child and should be included with the missing child entry. **To activate an Endangered Missing Child Alert, contact the Ohio Attorney General's Office, Missing Persons Unit at (855) BCI-OHIO (24/7 answered number).** The Endangered Missing Child Alert provides an option and resources that will distribute the endangered missing child's information to alert the public similar to the AMBER Alert system. The following actions occur when the alert is issued:

- The public display of a missing child's photo on the Ohio Attorney General Missing Persons and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children website.
- All statewide media notified by fax and e-mail.
- Utilize Facebook and Twitter to reach thousands of followers.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is notified.

- Ohio trucking companies are notified through Ohio Truckers Alert if the missing child is believed to be in a known vehicle.
- Coordination of alert activation in other states.
- The Bureau of Criminal Investigation Child Abduction Response Team Coordinator is notified and will contact you.
  - This person will help coordinate the BCI response to your investigative needs.
  - Coordinate statewide CART and/or Search and Rescue teams.

See the Resources chapter of this book that can assist you when handling a missing child investigation.

# **Endangered Missing Adult Alert**





## Endangered Missing Adult Alert

The Endangered Missing Adult Alert was created in 2008 to provide a tool to law enforcement to alert the public of a missing adult in a life threatening situation, utilizing many of the same tools similar to the AMBER Alert to disseminate the alert. The Endangered Missing Adult Criteria are:

- The local investigating law enforcement agency confirms that the individual is missing.
- The individual is 65 years of age or older or any adult that 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.

Before requesting an Endangered Missing Adult Alert activation, you must investigate the missing person report to verify the person is actually missing (which is a little different compared to a missing child report). It is encouraged you check with extended family, friends, neighborhood bars, local hospitals, local jails and boyfriend or girlfriends. If you have verified the person is missing and the circumstances meet all criteria, request the alert by entering the missing person into NCIC/LEADS using the "SA" code in the "MNP" field. This entry will be sent to the BCI Missing Persons Unit who will call to verify the alert request. If you do not receive a call from the BCI Missing Persons Unit within 10 minutes of making the entry, call (855) BCI-OHIO. When the alert is activated, the following will occur:

- E-mails and faxes sent to media statewide.
- Picture posted on the Attorney General's website at:  
[www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Law-Enforcement/Local-Law-Enforcement/Missing-Adult-Alert](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Law-Enforcement/Local-Law-Enforcement/Missing-Adult-Alert)
- Facebook and Twitter messages posted.
- ODOT Signboards activated if missing is in a known vehicle.
- License plate scanner activated on the Ohio Turnpike.
- An 800 toll free tip line is activated (866) 693-9171.
- Teletype sent to all law enforcement agencies statewide.
- Coordination of additional resources if needed, including out of state alert activation.

# Blue Alert





## Blue Alert

Criteria for issuing a Blue Alert:

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

When the criteria are met, make an entry into the LEADS Ohio COP file and select "Y" under the Blue Alert drop down box.

The alert is immediately sent to all Ohio Law Enforcement LEADS Terminals.

A duty officer will call to confirm the information.

Media blasts, radio broadcast and other non-EAS systems are activated.

# State Resources

## **State Resources**

During an active alert, contact the OSHP Hub/Columbus Communications Center at 614-466-2660.  
Please note, the contact information below is for administrative use only.

Ohio Attorney General's Office  
855-BCI-OHIO (855-224-6446)  
[www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/)

Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police  
614-761-0330  
[www.oacp.org](http://www.oacp.org)  
<http://www.lef-oh.org/cart/carthm.html>

Buckeye State Sheriff's Association  
614-431-5500  
[www.buckeyesheriffs.org](http://www.buckeyesheriffs.org)

Ohio Emergency Management Agency  
614-889-7150  
[www.ema.ohio.gov](http://www.ema.ohio.gov)

Ohio State Highway Patrol  
614-466-2660  
[www.statepatrol.ohio.gov](http://www.statepatrol.ohio.gov)

Ohio Department of Transportation  
614-644-7165  
[www.dot.state.oh.us](http://www.dot.state.oh.us)

Ohio Association of Broadcasters  
614-228-4052  
[www.oab.org](http://www.oab.org)

Ohio Child Abduction Response Team  
855-BCI-OHIO (855-224-6446)

State Emergency Communications Committee  
937-224-1137 x114

# **Ohio Missing Persons Unit**

## The Ohio Missing Persons Unit

[www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/missingpersons](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/missingpersons)

The Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse was established in 1993 under Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 109.65(B) and serves as a central repository of statistics and information about missing children in the State of Ohio. It provides assistance to law enforcement and families to help locate missing children and develops and disseminates educational information through news releases, training, child abuse prevention and safety fairs, and child safety lesson plans.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's office created the Ohio Missing Persons Unit in 2011 to better coordinate and convey information about services related to missing children and adults. The unit operates the Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse and is part of the Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). In 2013, it became part of BCI's Criminal Intelligence Unit to better coordinate BCI resources, facilitate the quickest possible response to missing person cases, and provide immediate access to important investigative tools. In addition to focusing on missing children, the Missing Persons Unit plays an integral role in cases and issues involving missing adults, human trafficking, and unidentified human remains.

The Missing Persons Unit provides a toll-free hotline, **(855) BCI-OHIO**, to field calls from law enforcement, parents, community members, and the media. The hotline is answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Attorney General's Office provides visibility at [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/MissingPersons](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/MissingPersons) for missing person cases and a central location at which families and the public can seek resources and guidance. The site features details and photos of missing children and adults and allows visitors to submit tips and print posters for specific cases. It also includes links to information about Ohio's unsolved homicides and unidentified remains. The Attorney General's Office also utilizes social networking websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, to raise awareness about missing person cases.

Staff members of the Missing Persons Unit also assist law enforcement and parents by:

- Issuing Endangered Missing Child and Endangered Missing Adult Alerts.
- Collaborating with others in the issuance of AMBER Alerts.
- Using social networking websites, public records, and law enforcement databases to help locate children.
- Providing a free program to collect DNA from a missing person's family.
- Training law enforcement, other professionals, and the public.
- Providing investigative guidance, resource recommendations, and assistance.
- Coordinate BCI investigative resources based on your assistance needs.
- Coordinate other State resources such as CART and Search and Rescue teams.
- Coordinate information with other States and National organizations.
- Assistance with poster development, posting on the Ohio Attorney General's website, posting to Facebook and other public dissemination.

## **Ohio Child Abduction Response Teams & Coordinators**

A Child Abduction Response Team is a network of law enforcement officers, trained individuals from other public safety agencies and trained volunteers who are specially trained and prepared to respond to specific “at-risk” missing, endangered or abducted children. There are several teams located throughout the state and are available to assist your agency upon request.

A CART team is led by a CART Coordinator who is trained to assess the resources needed for the child abduction, and can advise the head of the law enforcement agency/lead investigator. The coordinator can act with the head of the law enforcement agency/lead investigator to tailor what resources are needed during a child abduction investigation. Your local agency or a neighboring agency may have personnel designated as CART Coordinators. The Ohio State Highway Patrol and BCI maintain a list of these teams and their contact information and are able to call out CART resources for your agency.

## **Ohio Volunteer Search & Rescue Teams**

Volunteer Search & Rescue Teams (SAR) provide specialized volunteers trained according to nationally recognized standards in both Urban and Wilderness Search & Rescue. The goal of these organizations is to assist local, county and state law enforcement or responsible agency in the locating, accessing, stabilizing and extrication, transport of lost, trapped or missing persons. SAR responders are trained, competent, and able to perform the following tasks:

- Lost Person Incident Management
- Search Operations
- Consulting
- Evidence Preservation and Recovery
- Structure Search and Evacuation
- Communications Logistics
- Basic Medical Support
- Volunteer Management

A CART Coordinator can assist in contacting these resources.

**The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) 1-800-THE-LOST (800-843-5678)**  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

NCMEC was established in 1984 as a private nonprofit organization to provide services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention and investigation of abducted, endangered and sexually exploited children.

- Serves as a clearinghouse of information about missing and exploited children.
- Operates the CyberTipline that the public may use to report internet-related child sexual exploitation.

- Provides technical assistance to individuals and law enforcement agencies in the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of cases involving missing and exploited children.
- Provides secondary alert information about a missing child nationwide.
- Team Adam, a program of the NCMEC, provides a rapid, on-site assistance to law enforcement agencies and families in serious cases of missing children. Team Adam consultants are retired law enforcement professionals with years of investigative experience at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Assists the U.S. Department of State in certain cases of international child abduction in accordance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.
- Offers training programs to law enforcement and social service professionals.
- Distributes photographs and descriptions of missing children worldwide.
- Coordinates child-protection efforts with the private sector.
- Networks with nonprofit service providers and State Clearinghouses about missing children cases.
- Provides information about effective state legislation to help ensure the protection of children.

**A Child Is Missing (ACIM) 1-888-875-2246**

[www.achildismissing.org](http://www.achildismissing.org)

- ACIM provides a free service to law enforcement and operates 24 hours a day providing a “first responder” program to law enforcement.
- The program’s rapid response telephone system alerts residents in a targeted area about a missing child, missing elderly person (i.e., suffering from Alzheimer’s), or mentally disabled individual.
- A local law enforcement officer initiates the alert by calling ACIM (888-875-2246 or fax 954-763-4569). You must set up a free account before using them.
- Information about the child’s last known location will be required so that calls can be placed to residences in the area to alert the public to assist in recovering the child.
- One thousand telephone alert calls are placed to nearby residences and businesses in designated areas in less than 1 minute.

**The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS)**

[www.namus.gov](http://www.namus.gov)

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) is a national centralized repository and resource center for missing persons and unidentified decedent records. NamUs is a free online system

that can be searched by medical examiners, coroners, law enforcement officials, and the general public from all over the country in hopes of resolving these cases.

The **Missing Persons Database** contains information about missing persons that can be entered by anyone; however, before it appears as a case on NamUs, the information is verified. NamUs provides a user with a variety of resources, including the ability to print missing persons posters and receive free biometric collection and testing assistance. Other resources include links to state clearinghouses, medical examiner and coroner offices, law enforcement agencies, victim assistance groups, and pertinent legislation.

The **Unidentified Persons Database** contains information entered by medical examiners and coroners. Unidentified persons are people who have died and whose bodies have not been identified. Anyone can search this database using characteristics such as sex, race, distinct body features and even dental information.

The newly added **UnClaimed Persons database** (UCP) contains information about deceased persons who have been identified by name, but for whom no next of kin or family member has been identified or located to claim the body for burial or other disposition. Only medical examiners and coroners may enter cases in the UCP database. However, the database is searchable by the public using a missing person's name and year of birth.

When a new missing persons or unidentified decedent case is entered into NamUs, the system automatically performs cross-matching comparisons between the databases, searching for matches or similarities between cases.

NamUs provides free DNA testing and other forensic services, such as anthropology and odontology assistance. NamUs' Missing Persons Database and Unidentified Persons Database are now available in Spanish.

**The National Runaway Safeline (NRS)** 800-786-2929  
[www.1800runaway.org](http://www.1800runaway.org)

The National Runaway Safeline is the federally designated national communications system for runaway and homeless youth giving them and their families help and hope by providing non-judgmental, confidential crisis intervention, and local and national referrals through a 24-hour hotline. Their mission is to keep America's runaway and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.

The National Runaway Safeline provides law enforcement agencies with free assistance in finding resources in a geographic area, statistics to assist with determining needs, assistance with an out-of-state placement of a runaway child, training, and resource materials.

NRS administers the Home Free program with Greyhound Lines, Inc. to help runaways get home free of charge. The process starts when the child calls the National Runaway Switchboard at 800-786-2929. NRS will talk to the child about why they ran and why they feel ready to return home. Then the NRS will place a conference call between the child and their legal guardian to talk about the child's return and determine a plan of action. As a final step, NRS contacts Greyhound with the child to make travel arrangements home.

**Ohio State Highway Patrol Hub and Intelligence Unit – 614-799-6633**

When a missing child is reported and an AMBER Alert requested, the OHSP Hub will be notified. The Watch Desk Commander at the Hub, who is also the AMBER Alert Duty Officer, will call the agency from which the alert originated in order to confirm that the proper criteria are met to issue an AMBER Alert. If these criteria are met, the Duty Officer then provides all relevant information to the Communication Center, such as what regions the EAS and other alert systems will be activated in. Similarly, the Intelligence Unit of the OHSP will provide any information or resources that they can relating to a situation involving a missing child, such as issuing a bulletin or providing additional information about a suspect.

# National Resources

## National Resources

U.S. Department of Justice  
[www.amberalert.gov](http://www.amberalert.gov)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

Fox Valley Technical College  
[www.fvtc.edu](http://www.fvtc.edu)

AMBER Training and Technical Assistance  
[www.amber-net.org](http://www.amber-net.org)

A Child is Missing  
[www.achildismissing.org](http://www.achildismissing.org)

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

# Airport Notification

## Airport Notification

If your situation involves a flight risk and suspects or individuals may travel by airplane, alert your local airport.

Port Columbus authorities have partnered with the Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee to develop and implement an airport alert system for times when it is believed suspects or individuals might be attempting to leave the area by air travel. The new system will utilize the multiple screens throughout the airport typically listing arrival and departure information, as well as, video screens at the TSA screening points.